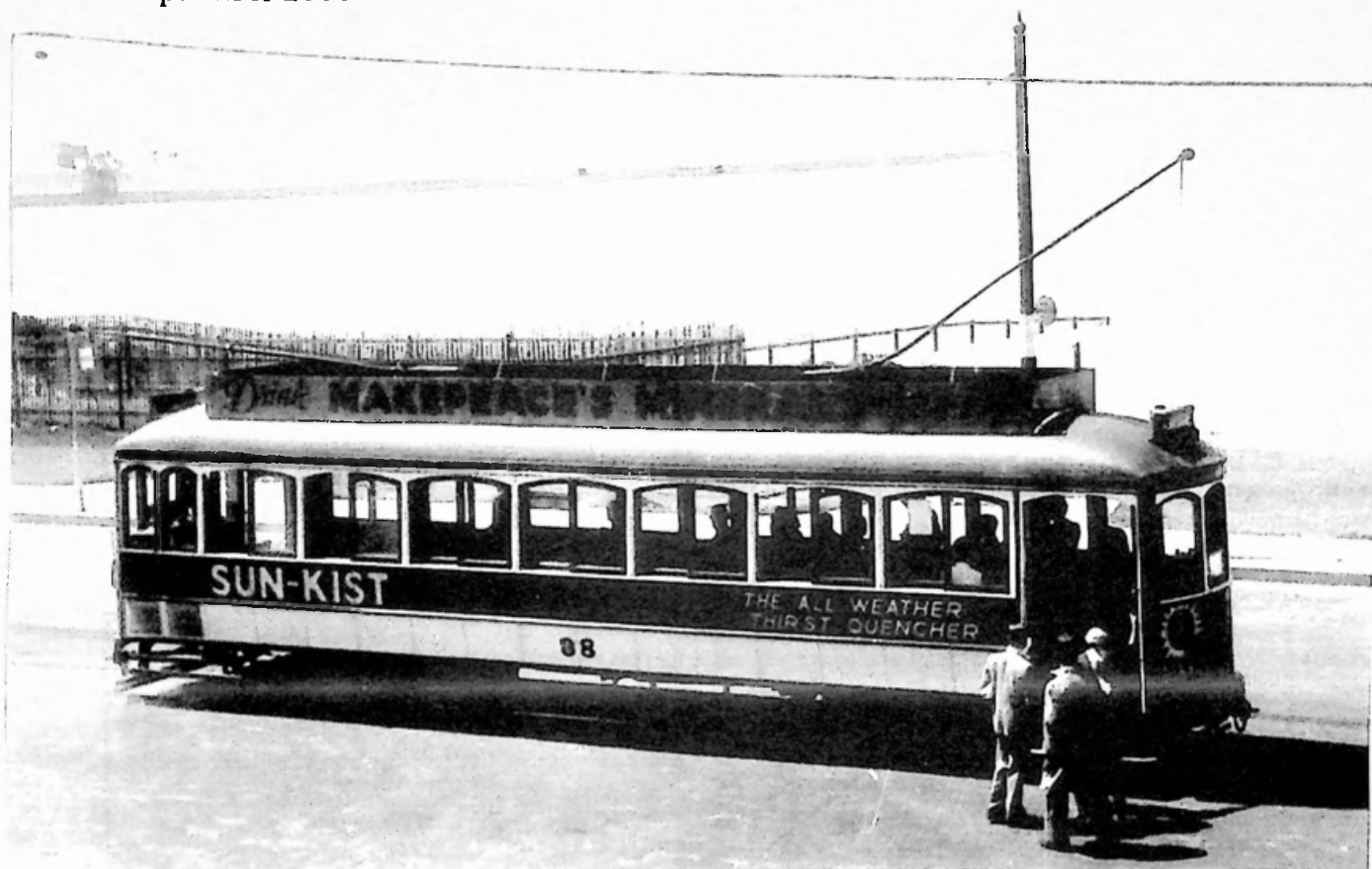


ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

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COVER STORY

Tramcar, Port Elizabeth, 1945

This picture was taken through the window of a boarding establishment and depicts a tramcar of the Port Elizabeth Electric Tramway Company, South Africa, at the seaside.

Taken in 1945, recalls the days when it was possible to walk out into the middle of the road to board a tramcar without much fear of other traffic. The long single deck car was rare in Britain, although Swansea and Cardiff in Wales, and Gateshead and Wigan in England used them.....those in Wigan bore a close resemblance to this Port Elizabeth example.

The car is facing east, heading into the morning sun. As with all tramcars of this length, it has two trolley poles.

Photograph by B.W.Fenix

News from the 21st Century

The Indian Government has announced that it will no longer purchase Hindustan "Ambassador" cars for use in official fleets. These Indian built 4 door saloons are based on the Morris "Oxford" of the second generation built after the Second World War, and are of a design now some fifty years old.

The "Ambassador" is widely used in India, in particular as a taxi. Although a very good work horse, it is now completely outdated when seen alongside imported cars and a new Indian built but Japanese designed car which has now found the favour of the Government.

Another range of vehicles which is still being built but which is of a somewhat outdated design are the Ashok Leyland commercial vehicles. These are mainly based on the "Comet" forward control model introduced by Leyland in the early fifties. However, there has also been a periodic building of double deck buses based on the "Titan" PD3, although some Indian cities requiring double deckers use "Comet" prime movers and double deck semi-trailer bodies.

The use of "Comets" as double deckers is a continuation of a trend started in the thirties when "light" Leyland chassis (Cubs and Badgers) were used as the basis for double deck buses. In traffic held back by slow-moving animal and man-powered

R & RTHC

SYMPOSIUM 2000

in association with
UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
European Studies Research Institute
Centre for Contemporary History
and Politics

at
Museum of British Road Transport
Coventry
on Saturday 21st October 2000
10.30 - 16.00

"Lessons from History for Transport Policy & Practice 1919-1939"

Speakers

Professor John Hibbs

Revd Dr. R. J. Buckley

Kevin Hey

Dr. Martin Higginson

T.B.Maund

The speakers will address such topics as competition between modes (bus, tram, cars), the regulation of the road passenger transport industry and the unforeseen consequences of regulation.

Enrolment forms
now available

OBITUARY

We record with sadness the death of an Associate Member of the Conference who attended our meetings in Coventry, and contributed significantly - sometimes pugnaciously - to them. L Gordon Reed, who died on 10 May 2000, aged 81, was concerned from the time that he joined, that there was much information to rescue in the fields of British commercial vehicle manufacturers and operators, and that the Conference ought to exercise its abilities and publicise its access to possible safe repositories for records. He also took up cudgels for members of Conference who could not attend the Coventry Meetings and for whom the Newsletter was the lifeline. He realised that as he grew older, he was becoming more dependent on the written word, and he urged that the Officers be given every assistance to be able to further what they were doing.

Gordon Reed had left school at 14 and become an apprentice at Commer Cars in Birmingham and thereafter followed a career in the motor industry, but embracing several facets of it. As a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), he was a conscientious objector and, during the war, was drafted to repair buses in Exeter and then in Bristol, where he met and married his wife, Molly. After the war, he bought a small rural garage at Combe St Nicholas, near Chard, but soon moved back to Bristol, as the Transport Manager for the Metal Agencies Company (MAC), a builders' merchants. The work involved vehicle repair and, as motor supplies improved, the selection and purchase of new vehicles. MAC merged into United Builders Merchants (UBM). Gordon was 30 years with the company, becoming Managing Director of UBM's transport operation, building a fleet with a reputation for high maintenance standards and smart appearance.

On his retirement in 1979, he became a transport consultant and freelance technical journalist. He was a retired member of the Chartered Institute of Transport, and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Road Transport Engineers. As well as his lifetime support for the Society of Friends, he had also taken an interest in the Co-operative movement, particularly the Walsall Co-op and its transport operations and the motor body building activities of the Bristol Co-op.

His wife, Molly had died fifteen years earlier, but he leaves a son, a daughter and four granddaughters. His son, Phil Reed, has appreciated the importance of his father's extensive transport library, and has taken it into care, bearing in mind the concern of both his father and of the Roads & Road Transport History Conference for the safe preservation of motor industry archives.

RA

GIBRALTAR

"Key to the Mediterranean"

Part Two

In Newsletter 21 we showed tickets issued by the two major tourist transport companies founded in Gibraltar, and who were responsible for opening up a tourist industry on The Rock as well as in southern Spain. M.H.Bland introduced a new form of transport to the British Colony when on 1st April 1966 an aerial cable car system was opened. The operating company was called Bland Aerial Ropeway Ltd., but the tickets (Bell Punch Ultimatic) carried the title of "Bland Cable Cars". As it turned out, 1966 was an inauspicious year for this new venture, as the Spanish frontier was soon to be closed, but the line survived. It operates from the harbour area to the top of The Rock, offering superb views of the town below, and an intermediate station called Apes Den allowed visitors to alight to see the Barbary Apes which roam wild in a protected area.

The second company owned by L.Francis (t/a Gibraltar Motorways) was very badly affected by the closure of the frontier, as the mainstay of the business was cross-border transport of both freight and passengers. The flagship service was the London - Gibraltar coach route which was operated by a very unusual vehicle. It was a left-hand drive AEC Regal IV fitted with a British built coach body most of which was in unpainted aluminium finish. In addition the vehicle also sported whitewall tyres, and carried the name "Britannia". The final unusual touch was the fact that it carried a Middlesex registration (43 TMC). After 1966 the vehicle was laid up, but it survived for many years in an open yard. Mr. Francis was forced to change the nature of his business, converting his main garage into a DIY store.

Gibraltar Motorways had a fleet of Bedford OBs with Duple bus bodies purchased new in the forties for local services, but there were two other bus operators worthy of mention. Whitelock Tours had a collection of interesting second hand coaches from Great Britain, including a pre-war Bedford with Duple coach body from the Southern Vectis fleet, a centre-entrance Duple bodied Albion from the Red & White fleet, and a Stachans bodied normal-control Albion from Eassons of Southampton. All these and some other vehicles carried a livery of dark blue and white.

A lighter shade of blue and cream were used as the livery of a fleet of small and rather old normal-control buses operated by Autobuses Internacionales,

used to convey dockyard and other workers from La Linea in Spain. These Spanish owned buses carried dual registration plates for Spain and Gibraltar, although they only ran a few hundred yards in the latter territory. The service ceased in 1966, from the time when the frontier was closed and the workers could no longer travel into the British Colony.

The two photographs below of Gibraltar Motorways vehicles are of interest in that they are from the actual prints once displayed on the walls of the Company's office. They were found and purchased in 1997 in a second-hand shop. Does anyone know the London departure point of the Gibraltar-London service ?



Above: A Leyland Tiger with a Duple body, used to convey tourists from Gibraltar to south Spain.
Below: AEC Regal IV left-hand drive coach "Britannia" at the Irish Town headquarters. The front indicator reads "Gibraltar - London". The bodywork is by Roe and Crossley. (Gib.Motorways



Rail Replacement BUS SERVICES in the Eastern Region of British Rail, 1929-1968 by John Hibbs

This text, originally read as the *Clinker Memorial Lecture 1999* to the Railway and Canal Historical Society, was also used as a basis for a short presentation at the February 2000 Business Meeting.

The present version has been slightly edited.

Introduction

After working there in the summer vacations of 1948 and 1949 I joined the Cambridge bus and coach company Premier Travel Ltd. in 1950 as personal assistant to the Managing Director, Mr. Arthur Lainson. In 1952 I was awarded the Rees Jeffreys Studentship at the London School of Economics, where my research on the economic consequences of the Road Traffic Act 1930 was supervised by the late Gilbert Ponsonby. Having completed my MSc (Econ) I went into partnership with the late A.B. Davidson to acquire the much smaller Corona Coaches Ltd. of Sudbury, Suffolk. In 1961 I joined the headquarters team of the Eastern Region as Traffic Survey Officer, leaving in 1967 as Market Research Officer, to take up a post at the City of London College (now the London Guildhall University). My background thus covers the two industries.

The passage of the Railways (Road Services) Acts of 1928 was followed by a stand off between the London & North Eastern and Thomas Tilling Ltd. over the purchase of the United Automobile Co., which Sir Frederick Heaton, the Chairman of Tillings, won hands down. As a result, the four main railway companies invested substantial sums in most of the territorial companies throughout Great Britain, much of it, in W.J. Crosland Taylor's experience, being wasted by the purchase of unsuitable competitors.

The key word of the day was co-ordination (just as today's is integration) which was the objective of the Royal Commission on Transport. So it is not surprising to find the British Railways Press Bureau in 1930 issuing a broadsheet with the title *Co-ordinating Rail and Road travel: How the Public will benefit*. I will set out the expected benefits as they appeared in this document, and you can reach your own conclusions as to how far they were achieved.

1. Interavailability of return tickets by bus or rail.

2. Service arrangements to facilitate exchange

of passengers between railway and road services.

3. Combination of railway and omnibus timetable matter, and adjustment of the services where possible to improve connections.

4. Employment of omnibus transport as extension of railway journeys for pleasure and other purposes.

5. Amplification of travel facilities by use of both arms of transport in combined tours.

Some of these benefits Mr. Prescott is still seeking, some have recently appeared in the wake of privatisation. But the ensuing sixty years saw little progress, and the ownership of both railways and bus companies by the British Transport Commission after 1947 made no difference. Indeed, in the course of my work at Liverpool Street I came across a document, dated about 1949, over the names of the then Chief Regional Officer and the chairmen of the Eastern National and Eastern Counties bus companies (both BTC owned) which recorded their agreement that co-ordination would be sufficiently provided for if bus services were routed as near as possible to railway stations; no co-ordination of time tables was to be required. This, to my mind, forms the subtext of much of the story I have to tell.

Railway bus services, as you will know, commenced at an early date. In the area I cover, the Great Eastern had used its buses to avoid the cost of building branch lines from Colchester to West Mersea and from Ipswich to Shotley, but the '1929 settlement' transferred the railway fleets to Tilling and British companies, and the opportunity for the railway companies to progressively move out of the 'thinner' services was lost - so that in the 1960s Dr. Beeching had to do it in far too much hurry. One example of what might have been done was the arrangement between the LNER and United Automobile whereby the smaller intermediate stations between York and Scarborough were closed, and bus services provided instead. So far as I know, the experiment was not repeated. Following my own experience of the wide cultural gap between the railway and bus company managers, I conclude that 'the culture of the rail' was largely responsible.

In one area, that of express coach services, confrontation entirely replaced co-ordination. After the passing of the Road Traffic Act 1930 the railway companies took every opportunity to object to applications for road service licences for long distance express coach services. In one Traffic Court case, I believe in Scotland, Counsel for the railway invited the Traffic Commissioners to close down all such services, in the interest of his clients. Such a decision was successfully resisted, but the Commissioners over the whole country applied conditions to most such licences

limiting the number of vehicles that might be operated on any one timing. Ironically several BTC owned bus companies in the 1950s succeeded in having these protective conditions removed, on the argument that they were now 'under the same roof' as their railway competitors.

Some Personal Experiences

Railway opposition to coach operators through the Traffic Courts continued into the post-war years unchanged. While I was with Premier Travel in the early 1950s we had constantly to fight for additional duplication on the licence for our Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester, Northampton, Bedford, St. Neots, Cambridge, Haverhill, Halstead, Colchester, Clacton service (Service 5), with its heavy demand for travel to Butlins Holiday Camp. Actually we had a Joint Co-ordinating Committee with the Railway Executive, with representatives from each of the Districts along the route (which is why I have listed all the timing points). These would be from the Eastern and London Midland Regions, but because we served Birmingham the Western had to be represented - for what purpose I know not. But still, the meetings made a nice day out, whether in Birmingham or at our offices in Cambridge, and they served the purpose of reaching an agreement about what increased duplication we could apply for that would not attract an objection, thereby saving the expense of a Traffic Court hearing. The Tilling Group (nationalised) bus companies resented the existence of the Committee, though the Midland "Red" had no worries, having no chance of getting a licence for Clacton themselves.

Rather different was the case of our service 38 (roughly Haverhill, Saffron Walden, London) which we had inherited from Burgoyne's *Grey Pullman* company of Haverhill. This was stage carriage as far as Saffron Walden, with an express licence that carried on to Kings Cross. Licences had to be renewed every five years, and objections to renewals were extremely rare. However, in about 1952 the Eastern Region lodged an objection to the renewal of the express licence, claiming that it should be truncated and run as a feeder to the trains at Audley End Station. So we had to produce witnesses to speak for the 'public need,' which was not difficult in view of the popularity of the service. I have a happy memory of the Chairman of the Parish Council at Hempstead, a village en route. A local farmer, with a good Essex accent, he opened his evidence by saying "I represent the 'Empstead Parish Council, the 'Empstead Women's Institute, the 'Empstead Pig Club and the inhabitants o' 'Empstead". He and the rest of the witnesses provided sufficient evidence for the learned Commissioners to refuse to uphold the objection.

I later on when I was running Corona Coaches,

I applied to extend a morning journey from Clare to Sudbury station, to connect with an early train for London. I argued that the market here was not the same as that for my much slower (though cheaper) coach service, which in any case would not get them to London until later. Much to my surprise there came a form of objection from the Eastern Counties Omnibus Co. (the same that had agreed that there was no need to run bus services to railway stations). They had no *locus* whatsoever, but a bit of investigation told me that they had done it at the request of Liverpool Street (who presumably did not want any of the extra traffic I was setting out to bring them). No doubt I could have succeeded in making them look foolish before the Traffic Commissioners, but it would have been expensive and time consuming, so I had a word with Mr. Postle, our popular Stationmaster, and he spoke to someone up the line, and the objection was withdrawn. But I still had to get permission to use the station forecourt.

Much later again, one of my early consultancy contracts was to survey public transport in the Rural District of South Molton, well into Western Region territory for an ex Eastern man like me, but never mind. Terraneau's Coaches ran the rail replacement service between South Molton and Dulverton with a subvention from B.R. The people of Molland were asking for it to be diverted to serve their village, which lies up a hill from the main road. I calculated (with my Costing Service training - Eastern Region, of course) that the short diversion would have an escapable cost of 5½d. per mile, and that two additional return passengers per week would justify the diversion; a bit of market research indicated a significantly larger demand. Sadly, the Western Region decreed that full average cost per mile should be applied to the diversion, so Molland did not get its service, and the railway lost the chance of reducing the subvention.

In fairness, I must add that standard practice everywhere was exact station-to-station replacement (we shall examine an exception later), and that in this way the replacement programme was generally inefficient on any cost/revenue calculation.

TERRANEAUS TOURS (South Molton)

HAVERHILL	CLARE	STAGE FROM
SINGLE		A 67402
RETURN		
		STAGE TO

NOT TRANSFERABLE

Bell Pullman Company, Ltd., London

A 'Bellgraphic' ticket as used by Terraneau's Tours.
(See also item on page 14)

Line Closures and Service Withdrawals in East Anglia and Essex

This is a list of the developments I propose to consider. For the dates I am indebted to Mr. D. I. Gordon's *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain - Volume V, The Eastern Counties*. (David & Charles).

Southwold Railway - closed 12th April 1929
Ely - St. Ives - passenger service withdrawn 3rd
February 1931
Hadleigh (Suffolk) branch - passenger service
withdrawn 29th February 1932

Kelvedon & Tollesbury - passenger service
withdrawn 7th May, 1951
Mid-Suffolk Light Railway (Haughley-Laxfield)
closed 28th July 1952
Elsenham and Thaxted - passenger service
withdrawn 15th September 1952
Wivenhoe and Brightlingsea - closed 31st Jan. to
7th Dec. 1953 & 15th June 1964
Midland and Great Northern - most services wdn.
and sundry sections closed 2nd March 1959
Bury St. Edmunds - Long Melford - passenger
service withdrawn 10th April 1961
Colne Valley and Halstead - passenger service
withdrawn 1st January 1962
Cambridge - Soham - Mildenhall - passenger
service withdrawn 16th June 1962
Audley End - Bartlow - closed 28th December 1964
(passenger service withdrawn in September)
Sudbury - Shelford (Stour Valley) - closed
6th March 1967

Most of the branch lines in Norfolk and Suffolk were known as "farmers' railways", built mainly for freight, much of which was decimated by the agricultural depression of the late 19th century. From the mid 1920s the motor lorry offered faster carriage to the London markets than the pick-up train, as recorded in Arthur Randell's book *Fenland Railwayman* (Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1968). The depression of the early 1930s increased the problem. Rural population was falling throughout the period, so that there was less and less traffic for rail and road passenger transport to share, and the buses went closer to people's homes, and usually closer to the centre of the towns as well.

Few if any of the early closures needed or were given replacement bus services, and there were no regulatory requirements for them. The first line to go, the Southwold Railway, simply succumbed to a more direct bus service. It was exceptional in being of narrow gauge. Less than two years later passenger services were withdrawn on the Ely - St. Ives line, but presumably the existing bus services were assumed

to be sufficient for what demand remained on what was perhaps the weakest of the farmers' lines. The final pre-war closure, the Hadleigh branch, suffered from the disadvantage that the junction with the main line at Bentley faced the down lines, preventing a direct train service to Ipswich, which was served after 1919 by the bus services of Eastern Counties and Skinners. But it must have been the commencement by Corona coaches in 1930 of a feeder coach service to Sudbury, with connections and through services to London, that led to the withdrawal of the passenger service on the branch line two years later.

The post-war years

The Eastern Region of the Railway Executive started its closure process ten years before the arrival of Dr. Beeching, and had indeed concluded the greater part of it before some other regions had started to look at the problem of too many empty trains. The London Midland Region commenced closure proceedings for the Great Central at about the time Liverpool Street started them for the Midland & Great Northern, but the M&GN had been largely closed some seven years before completion of the Great Central process, since in the meantime, line closures had become a highly political issue.

The first line to go was the delightfully archaic Kelvedon & Tollesbury, which had once extended to a pier on the Blackwater Estuary which had been expected to have been used by ocean liners. At gated crossings the train would stop for the fireman to open the gates, and then stop again for the guard to close them. From 1930, Osborne's of Tollesbury had run buses that served every place along the line, and extended to Witham, while Tollesbury and Tiptree had direct services to both Malden and Colchester for some years, so it is hardly surprising that no replacement service was required. Then, as now, people prefer a direct journey with no need to change, and the buses made trips to Colchester both quicker and more convenient. The trains did not even work into the main line platforms at Kelvedon.

The Mid-Suffolk, essentially a farmers' line, between Haughley Junction and Laxfield, suffered from the same problem as the former of lying on the wrong axis for the traffic, as did the Elsenham and Thaxted which we shall be coming to next. However the Mid-Suffolk lives on in John Hadfield's delightful novel *Love on a Branch Line*, and in the excellent film based on it. The passenger demand was entirely north-south, centred upon Ipswich, which doomed the line so soon as direct buses became available. What little demand there might be for Stowmarket could be served by the former carriers' market day services, so the mere facts of geography caused its demise and there was no direct replacement.

The Elsenham and Thaxted Light Railway was

the first of the lines I have selected to require a subsidised bus service when it closed later in the same year. For me it was perhaps the most delightful: I remember riding on it one summer afternoon, alone in the carriage, with my legs dangling out of the door at the back of the train, watching the fields and farms as we passed by (with all of its six passengers). The line terminated at the top of a hill a mile and a half out of Thaxted, but it was much loved if little used, and the last train was packed out. It was met by the town band. The problem here was that the people of Thaxted looked to Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, and they had a direct bus service operated by the *Viceroy* company connecting these towns. So it came as a surprise to most of us when Eastern National applied for a licence to run between Thaxted and Elsenham, connecting with the trains - and not for a service through to Bishops Stortford, which in traffic terms would have appeared more logical. But this was the first strictly like-for-like replacement that we have met with. (It did not last all that long).

I turn now to the Wivenhoe to Brightlingsea branch, which is the one I know best, having grown up in that northernmost of the Cinque Ports. One of the earliest examples of bus replacement, which was both unintentional and incomplete but not I fear untypical, took place here in 1919. A.W.Berry & Son had started a bus service to Colchester, with a stand outside the railway station. When the 1919 strike closed the train service, one of Mr. Berry's sons, who was driving, found people coming out of the station to get on his bus. He phoned his father at the Port Lane depot in Colchester and another bus was sent down, and local tradition had it that many of the passengers never went by train again.

The railway formed the sea wall, behind the salt marsh, over much of its length, and there was a swing bridge across the creek at Alresford, which allowed Thames barges to reach the ropeway bringing gravel from pits on the Wivenhoe side, and Thorington Mill at the head of the creek. Closure first came on 31st January 1953 when the great storm that caused chaos and loss of life right down to Harwich washed away three miles of the trackbed. The Eastern National company provided a replacement service between Brightlingsea and Wivenhoe, but local pressure led to the line being reopened.

Closure, though, was inevitable, and took place in June 1964. The obvious replacement service would have been from Brightlingsea to Thorington, some four miles distant, to which the Great Eastern had run its own buses when the line was cut similarly in 1904. But the station at Thorington had been closed (4/11/57), so the 'permanent' replacement service ran to Colchester North Station, until some time later it was merged with the established Brightlingsea to

Colchester bus service (no doubt when the subvention was no longer available).

In the meantime there had been two further closures. The Colne Valley & Halstead, which had remained independent until 1923, and was famous for never having had a fatal accident and never having paid a dividend, extended from Chapel and Wakes Colne, on what is now the Sudbury branch, to Haverhill, where it had its own terminus as well as working trains into the GER station. This closure was the first in my experience to involve a contested application for the necessary road service licence (for the section north of Halstead). In the event, the replacement service did not last long. The Mildenhall branch, another farmers' railway, was never a success. There was an adverse operating ratio of eight to one in 1958. A belated attempt to improve traffic by operating trains from the Mildenhall - Soham section through to Ely and Newmarket produced no improvement, so that closure became inevitable. But here we meet a peculiarity of the process, which gives me concern when I regard it still.

The replacement bus service consisted of two journeys each way on weekdays, provided by the Eastern Counties company. Whilst no replacement services to my knowledge ever appeared in Eastern Region publicity, this one was included in the bus company's timetable with the London connections shown at Cambridge. A few years later the railway timetable was re-scheduled, but no-one at Liverpool Street seems to have thought of notifying the bus company, whose publicity continued to show the former times, now of no value. Hardly surprisingly, the service did not last much longer.

The Midland & Great Northern (M&GN) closure, along with the Great Yarmouth - North Walsham line of the Norfolk & Suffolk Joint Committee and the remaining section of the North Walsham - Cromer line, was the first high profile exercise of the Eastern Region. It had been completed two years before I 'joined the service' (as we used to say), so I have no knowledge of the process whereby the Eastern Counties company got lumbered with a complex collection of replacement services, much of which was thinned out pretty drastically when the subvention came to an end. But that the closure was justified, however much emotion was involved, cannot be doubted. Each of the M&GN services was paralleled, point-to-point, by those of the Great Eastern, and these were better linked to the major attraction of Liverpool Street. The through workings from the Midlands to the holiday camps remained possible.

The problem facing the bus company arose from geography. For rural and interurban bus services the ideal journey time from one town to the next is fifty minutes; with a five minute layover at each

end, an hourly or half-hourly schedule is efficient to run, as well as being good for traffic. Anything longer is expensive, so irregular headways become inescapable. And most towns in Norfolk and Suffolk tend to require that longer journey time. This, combined with the railway managers' requirement that buses served every station, produced a set of services that busmen regarded with horror, and so, by and large, did passengers too. But the volume of protest was such that replacement on this scale was part of the price the Eastern Region had to pay for the remarkable pace of the closure proceedings.

I now turn to an example of sensible planning, when the Audley End - Saffron Walden - Bartlow line came up for closure: the sensible planning, to be sure, coming not from the railway management but from the bus company. The map below sets the scene. In this case, neither of the two Tilling companies, Eastern Counties and Eastern National, stood any chance of getting a licence granted, as the Colne Valley experience had made plain, so negotiations were opened with Premier Travel, and with Viceroy Coaches of Saffron Walden (who for many years had operated a Sunday evening service between Saffron Walden and Audley End, since no trains ran on the Sabbath Day).

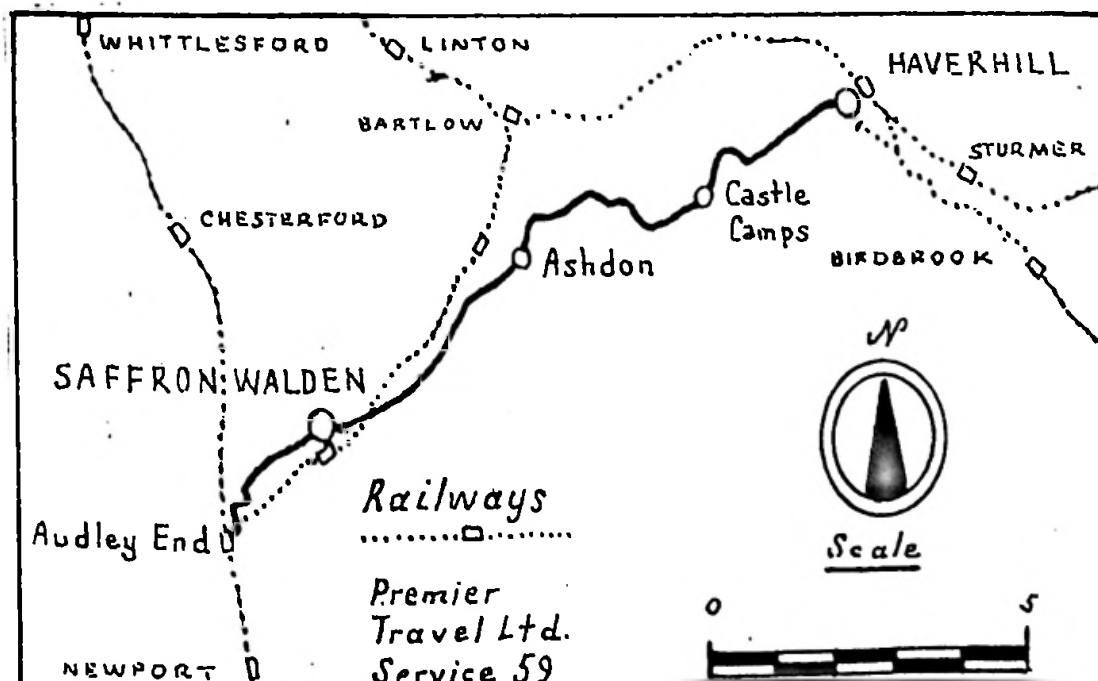
The railway managers assumed that the replacement would be, as usual, point-to-point, unaware no doubt that Bartlow village consists of half a dozen houses, a church, a pub and a farm, and some prehistoric tumuli. I have little doubt that if either of the Tilling companies had the *locus* to provide the service, that is what would have happened. Whether Haverhill passengers would have enjoyed changing from train to bus and then back to train again must be questioned. The bus service would surely not have lasted long.

Instead, Premier Travel's managing director, Mr.E.A. Lainson, saw the situation through the eyes

of a 'good traffic man' (a competence that seems to have been sadly lacking by then in the two Tilling companies, engaged as they were with 'managed decline'). Having a depot at Haverhill, Premier contracted to operate Service 59 direct, as shown on the map, which had the effect of giving Castle Camps a daily bus service for the first time, and of running the length of Ashdon, where the railway 'halt' was at the end of a muddy lane. Much of the traffic on this section remained local to Saffron Walden, whence the rail feeder service was strengthened with journeys run by Viceroy Coaches.

But this was not all. Mr.Lainson told the Liverpool Street management that he wanted through ticketing between bus and rail: I well remember the horror with which this was received. Despite all the talk about co-ordination, nothing of the sort had happened so far. A compromise was reached, whereby through season tickets were made available, but I suspect these did not long survive the closure of the station at Haverhill, just over two years later. And, as I ascertained, booking clerks at Liverpool Street were not told about the arrangement, nor for that matter about the bus service itself, which of course did not appear in the Eastern Region timetable (the train services did of course appear in the Premier Travel leaflet). Saffron Walden was just dropped from the station announcements at Liverpool Street, as so many other places had gone as if they had never existed. So long as I was there I saw to it that the platform inspectors had copies of the Premier Travel leaflet, but then..... (see also overleaf)

My final example is the closure of the greater part of the Stour Valley line (no, not the one in the Midlands !) just over two years later. This was the section from Shelford Junction to Sudbury, leaving that town as the terminus of a branch from Marks Tey. The Long Melford to Bury St. Edmunds service



had gone six years before, and no replacement had been necessary there, Chambers' Colchester - Sudbury - Bury service covered the route on weekdays, while Rule of Boxford ran from Sudbury on Sundays, when Chambers did not run buses (and there had been no trains anyway).

The Stour Valley was different. At one time it had been the Birmingham - Clacton trains that competed with Premier Travel's Service 5 (mentioned above). They took just as long as the coach service, and were made up of non-corridor compartment stock - no wonder we could always get witnesses to tell the Traffic Courts that they would rather go by coach! But local people still saw this as a vital link, despite steadily falling traffic.

The replacement service ran only between Sudbury and Haverhill and was awarded to Theobald of Long Melford, since neither Eastern Counties nor Eastern National had any *locus*. The Eastern Counties service between Haverhill and Cambridge was no doubt deemed sufficient, but one wonders why no through service was provided; could it have been the thought of an independent running over a combine company's route? Old jealousies last long. As a result, it is doubtful whether the vital link remained, and the through traffic must have disappeared very soon. Once again, the railway management did nothing to encourage it, and Haverhill became yet another town to be dropped from the loudspeakers. It had always been pronounced wrong, anyway.

Actually, a good traffic man might have spotted the potential for a limited-stop coach service between Colchester and Cambridge, calling at the main-line stations at each end. Indeed I contemplated something like it when I was running Corona Coaches. The licensing system would have prevented it, of course, and without the licensing system the rail replacement policy would have been



Area Office :
CAMPS ROAD
HAVERHILL
2138

Head Office :
15 MARKET HILL
CAMBRIDGE
53327

Area Office :
14 HILL STREET
SAFFRON WALDEN
3374

NEW SERVICE 59

HAVERHILL—SAFFRON WALDEN—

AUDLEY END STATION

via CASTLE CAMPS and ASHDON

(Replacement Service for
Bartlow—Audley End Railway Line)

Commencing

MONDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER, 1964

and until further notice

Showing journeys operated by Messrs. F. C. Moore Ltd.
(Viceroy Coaches) and Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd.,
Service 301, and principal rail connections with London
(Liverpool Street) and Cambridge

Above and right:

The Premier Travel handbill produced for the Bartlow - Audley End replacement service (courtesy R. Atkinson) The back page of this leaflet declared that Season Tickets to and from London (Liverpool Street) were available from the rail booking office at Audley End, and could be used on all the bus journeys shown in the timetable.

In addition, it was indicated that railway tickets could be purchased at station prices at the Premier Travel Agency Ltd., 14 Hill Street, Saffron Walden, by personal visit or by post.

MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS

BUS	Haverhill (Market Hill)	dep.	—	—	—	07 06	—	—	08 25	—	12 05	—	16 05	18 12
	Castle Camps (School)	"	—	—	—	07 19	—	—	08 38	—	12 18	—	16 18	18 25
	Ashdon (Rose and Crown)	"	—	—	—	07 27	—	—	08 46	—	12 26	—	16 26	18 33
	Saffron Walden (Common)	"	07 10	07 28	07 39	07 39	07 50	08 10	08 58	10 38	12 38	14 38	16 38	18 45
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	07 20†	07 38†	07 49†	07 49	08 00†	08 20†	09 08	10 48†	12 48	14 48†	16 48	18 53
RAIL	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	07 30	07 48	07 59	07 59	08 10	08 30	09 18	10 58	12 58	14 58	16 58	18 58
	London (Liverpool Street)	arr.	08 38	08 52	08 58	08 58	09 18	09 38	10 18	11 58	13 58	15 58	17 58	19 58
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	—	—	07 56	07 56	—	08 56	09 30	11 30	13 30	15 30	17 27	19 05
	Cambridge (Station)	arr.	—	—	08 21	08 21	—	09 20	09 46	11 46	13 46	15 46	17 43	19 26

MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS

RAIL	Cambridge (Station)	dep.	07 40	08 00	09 00	10 40	12 40	14 50	16 40	17 50	—	18 40	—	—	21 20
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	07 59	08 30	09 18	10 58	12 58	15 16	16 58	18 16	—	18 58	—	—	21 50
	London (Liverpool Street)	dep.	06 32	07 32	08 36	10 36	12 36	14 36	16 36	16 56	17 36	17 56	18 36	19 36	20 42
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	07 56	08 56	09 30	11 30	13 30	15 30	17 27	17 53	18 36	19 05	19 36	20 30	22 11
BUS	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	08 00†	09 00†	09 35	11 35†	13 35	15 35†	17 30	18 20†	18 40†	19 10†	19 40	20 39*	2220†
	Saffron Walden (Common)	"	08 10	09 10	09 45	11 45	13 45	15 45	17 38	18 30	18 50	19 20	19 50	20 47	22 30
	Ashdon (Rose and Crown)	"	—	—	09 57	—	13 57	—	17 50	—	—	—	20 02	—	—
	Castle Camps (School)	"	—	—	10 05	—	14 05	—	17 58	—	—	—	20 10	—	—
	Haverhill (Market Hill)	arr.	—	—	10 18	—	14 18	—	18 11	—	—	—	20 23	—	—

FOR NOTES SEE NEXT PAGE

ROUTE IN SAFFRON WALDEN

Via Ashdon Road, Common Hill, Hill Street, George Street, High Street and London Road

SATURDAYS

BUS	Haverhill (Market Hill)	dep.	—	—	07 06	—	08 25	—	12 05	—	16 05	18 12
	Castle Camps (School)	"	—	—	07 19	—	08 38	—	12 18	—	16 18	18 25
	Ashdon (Rose and Crown)	"	—	—	07 27	—	08 46	—	12 26	—	16 26	18 33
	Saffron Walden (Common)	"	07 00.	07 39.	07 39	08 00	08 58	10 38	12 38	14 38	16 38	18 45
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	07 10†	07 49†	07 49	08 10†	09 08	10 48†	12 48	14 48†	16 48	18 53
RAIL	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	07 20	07 59	07 59	08 20	09 18	10 58	12 58	14 58	16 58	18 58
	London (Liverpool Street)	arr.	08 27	08 58	08 58	09 28	10 18	11 58	13 58	15 58	17 58	19 58
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	—	08 06	08 06	—	09 30	11 30	13 19	15 30	17 27	19 30
	Cambridge (Station)	arr.	—	08 30	08 30	—	09 46	11 46	13 35	15 46	17 43	19 48

SATURDAYS

RAIL	Cambridge (Station)	dep.	07 40	—	09 00	10 40	12 40	14 40	16 40	—	—	18 40	—	—	21 20
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	07 59	—	09 18	10 58	12 58	14 58	16 58	—	—	18 58	—	—	21 50
	London (Liverpool Street)	dep.	06 42	07 42	08 36	10 36	12 36	14 36	16 36	—	17 36	—	18 36	19 36	20 42
	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	arr.	08 06	09 06	09 30	11 30	13 30	15 30	17 27	—	18 30	—	19 30	20 30	22 16
BUS	Audley End (Railway Stn.)	dep.	08 10†	09 10†	09 35	11 35†	13 35	15 35†	17 30	18 20†	18 40†	19 10†	19 40	20 39*	22 20†
	Saffron Walden (Common)	"	08 20	09 20	09 45	11 45	13 45	15 45	17 38	18 30	18 50	19 20	19 50	20 47	22 30
	Ashdon (Rose and Crown)	"	—	—	09 57	—	13 57	—	17 50	—	—	—	20 02	—	—
	Castle Camps (School)	"	—	—	10 05	—	14 05	—	17 58	—	—	—	20 10	—	—
	Haverhill (Market Hill)	arr.	—	—	10 18	—	14 18	—	18 11	—	—	—	20 23	—	—

NOTES

† These journeys operated by Messrs. F. C. Moore Ltd. (Viceroy Coaches)

* This journey operated by Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd., Service 301, terminating at Saffron Walden (Railway Station)

CHRISTMAS DAY—No service

very much more difficult. but as I see it, the Stour Valley closure is yet another example of the failure of the railway managers to make any effort to retain the traffic they were losing, or to attempt any kind of co-ordination.

Some Professional Engagements

1. Thetford to Swaffam This was an exercise that I undertook while still at Liverpool Street, and it is not without its humour. Of the Thetford - Swaffam line it was said that it was expected to be closed for forty years before that finally happened, which must have served to weaken demand for the train service. The passenger trains were finally withdrawn on 15th June 1964, and the replacement journeys, run by a small local coach firm, ran almost entirely for school children. Some time after closure, the district Manager at Norwich asked for someone to come down and find out why the subvention was so much higher than had been expected. So they sent me.

The answer was that the operator had convinced himself and his accountant that he was required to provide dedicated vehicles for the service. There were four of them as I recall, all second-hand but all in very good condition. He was somewhat irate when we told his accountant to stop loading his invoices with the full replacement cost of the buses, but on the train back to London I was moved to reflect upon the skills of small businessmen in Norfolk.

2. The Sudbury Branch The second of these engagements came after I had left the railway and was setting up my own consultancy. One of my first commissions had been a survey of the Waverley Line in Scotland in 1968, then the following year I was

invited to review the proposals for closure of the Marks Tey - Sudbury branch, which I knew so well. The Scottish Region had been helpful in providing me with figures, but the Eastern Region (by then based at York) refused to help, so I had to use the data supplied to the TUCC, together with my own insights. I attended the first day of the TUCC hearing at Sudbury, where tempers ran high, and I was threatened with physical violence by some men who identified me as a former railway man and therefore responsible for the closure of the Stour Valley. It is very hard to reason with strong emotional commitment.

My conclusions were in favour of delaying the closure. Sudbury was to be an 'overspill' town, and while I showed that industry had developed in Haverhill despite the loss of its railway, the threat of closure might prejudice further developments at Sudbury. The line should be kept open until at least 1975, when the situation should be re-examined. If the line were to be closed, I recommended a connecting coach (not bus) service to Marks Tey. Finally, I analysed the figures submitted for the cost of keeping the branch open, and showed that they had been seriously inflated. (No doubt that is why York had refused to help).

In the event, my recommendation for delay was accepted, and the branch remains open; long may it continue! Privately I was assured that my report, which was published, had been well received in the "corridors of power." But I have one last regret.

The original station had been close to the town centre, but when the line had been extended to Haverhill and Shelford a new station was built - the



HISTORY ON A POSTCARD

This picture post card produced by Brenners Bazaars, Great Yarmouth, shows a busy market day from the times when the 'farmers' railways' were at their height. The corporation tram is bound for Wellington Pier.

one that I was later to run a bus service to - and the site of the old station became a goods yard, with turntable access to local factories. This was no longer in use, and so the opportunity was there to extend the branch tracks to the original site; but this was not to be and the land was sold. I recall only too clearly how impossible it used to be to persuade the Estates and Rating people to look at any constructive use of a closed goods yard. All they intended to do was sell off the land. Just another sad story of British Rail as I knew it.

3. A Suggestion Ignored My final case study concerns a closure case outside East Anglia: the East Lincolnshire line from Grimsby to Peterborough. Semi trunk lines like this are much more of a problem than branches, and buses generally fail to retain much of the through traffic. The East Suffolk remains open today partly because it was hard to see how to replace the service.

In the case of the East Lincs, however, I came up with a solution which I submitted in a report to the Eastern Region Board. As I have observed, as soon as a passenger service is withdrawn, it disappears from the railway's consciousness. Haverhill and Saffron Walden are examples, but there must have been myriads more which were simply dropped from the public address system and the timetable. Such was the gulf between rail and road that I was determined, as a busman, to find a way to overcome it.

This was really quite simple. It is just what we have seen was claimed when the four main line companies obtained statutory power to operate road services in 1929, only to finish up by taking a share in the bus companies' profits instead. Why not replace the trains on the East Lincs line with buses run by (or for) British Rail?

The Transport Act 1962 had given the railway powers to run buses without a road service licence in replacement of train services. Opinion had it that this was intended only for emergencies, but in my view the powers were seldom (if ever) used in order to avoid conflict, especially with the Tilling group of state-owned bus companies.

What we should do, I said, was to contract with Lincolnshire Road Car for them to provide a number of buses to work the service, painted in BR livery, with Road Car drivers and BR conductors. I reckoned we should need six Leyland Atlanteans, and some of the downstairs seats should be removed to make room for parcels (but not fish). Road Car would be responsible for providing relief vehicles "on hire" at busy times, and for the peak traffic to and from Skegness, using local coach operators' vehicles if required.

Here again I looked for a good traffic route,

and not an exact all-stations replacement. By avoiding Firsby, and so a double run in and out of Skegness, I produced a timetable for a very promising limited-stop service between Grimsby, Louth, Skegness, Boston, Spalding and Peterborough, calling at major settlements along the road. I assumed that few people (the occasional enthusiast apart) would travel the whole length of the route, but when I calculated the lapsed time from the middle section, north to Doncaster and south to Kings Cross, by connecting train services, it turned out in each case to be at least as good as the existing train service.

This, I thought, was a very attractive package, but I was not really surprised when it was rejected, without explanation. The idea of buses running as trains was too much to ask. And it should be remembered that, to my knowledge, not one of the bus services I have discussed ever appeared in the Eastern Region timetable book. Sad, isn't it?

Conclusions

I have chosen to draw your attention to a problem that worried me during my time 'in the service' and that has continued to do so since. When I joined the Eastern Region team in 1961 I rather expected that colleagues would want to make use of my experience in the bus industry. With very few exceptions they did not. And to a considerable extent the rail v. road attitude was mutual. Between us and our associated bus companies there was a series of Chinese Walls. Indeed I heard at first hand that D.F. Dear, the founder of the British Transport Costing Service (along with my boss A.W. Tait) offered to look at bus costing for the Tilling Group, but was given the brush off. That was a shame, because their totally inept costing was to lead to what I have called "the strange suicide of the British bus industry".

I believe the problem arose from two factors, only one of which was peculiar to the railways. That one was a sense of the superiority of rail transport that is to be found only too widely in the British establishment. H.C. Johnson (later Sir Henry), who was my General Manager, used to say the British were seriously overworked. Everyone has his own job, he would say, and then they try and run the railways as well. I fear that this led to the erection of barriers, which even common membership of the Institute of Transport could not dissolve, and I know that it was as strong, if not stronger, on the freight side as on the passenger. Indeed like the notorious attitude of Balliol men, it smacked of "effortless superiority". In the market you cannot afford to be ignorant of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses. Yet all too many of my colleagues (with notable exceptions) did not seem to have thought about what market the railway was in.

In short, they believed that their job was *running trains*; not the movement of people and goods. And it was equally true, as I had seen for myself, that many in the bus industry were similarly blinkered, which was even worse, since they failed even to identify the private car as their true competitor. I am in no way surprised that the nationalised British Transport Commission failed entirely to "integrate" the industry. Human attitudes, often undefined, are hard to change, and it takes a long time.

But even sadder is the way that these attitudes led to the loss of revenue to the railway, and to the growth of car use, mainly in rural areas. I hope I have said enough to make that plain. I know too that this article is based on limited research, and I hope that more work will be done - the archives at Crich, Coalbrookdale and York offer the student all the data necessary from the bus side. I would like to see some comparative work for Northern Ireland, and for the Irish Republic, too. As all researchers must, I would welcome to be proved wrong, but I submit that we have evidence here to question the judgement and processes of rail management over a lengthy period - and of bus company management too. So my conclusion must be those well known words, said in a far more serious context: *nought for your comfort*.

TERRANEAU'S TOURS

Some notes by Roger Atkinson

Like many independent bus and coach tour operators, this family business began as a cycle and motor dealership in 1903, based in The Square, South Molton, Devon. The firm probably acquired Moor and Son, South Molton in 1938.

Services in 1954 consisted of South Molton (Square) to South Molton (Station)(weekdays only), and South Molton - Barnstaple (Tuesdays and Fridays). The railway station closed on and from 3rd October 1966.

By 1979 the services operated were more numerous, but operating only on certain days of the week or month. In the autumn of 1999, the Western Traffic Commissioner revoked the firm's 'O' Licence.

A ticket of this firm is illustrated on page 6. After the "Bellgraphic" system, the operator used Setright Speed..

Research into this firm revealed the name of yet another co-operative society which operated coaches, i.e. West Somerset Co-operative Society, of Taunton. In the fifties, both Terraneau's and West Somerset Co-op operated some AEC Regal coaches which had started life in the Isle of Wight, but which were later commandeered by the War Department.

Ahoy there, bus rider !

Ron Phillips considers the extensive use of maritime terminology for land transport

A recent holiday in Italy reminded me once again that the vocabulary established in the first instance for shipping was transferred extensively to land vehicles. The term which triggered this thought was found on a bus stop; passengers were reminded that tickets were to be purchased before entering the bus, and the words used (literal translation) were: "Tickets must be purchased ashore" (*a terra*)

A long time ago I read a book about Bristol, in which the author suggested that the maritime traditions of the city were carried on by the tram drivers who stood, in their rain capes, on the prow of the trams as they crossed the open spaces of The Downs. Yes indeed !

Consider the following standard English words as applied to trams and buses.

to board (generally used in preference to mount and dismount)

the boom (word for the trolley arm)

the bulkhead (a structural feature important in both ships and trams and buses)

the crew (Note: not used in this country, but certainly in the English speaking parts of the Southern Hemisphere, is the term 'bus captain' for the driver/conductor of one person operated vehicles)

the deck (on early open top vehicles this was wooden and waterproofed just as on a ship)

the mast (as used to support the trolley on open top cars)

the rails (once to assist climbing the stairs, and to prevent passengers falling off, now needed to hold on as the driver subjects passengers to maximum G-force)

the saloon (term for the covered-in sections of a vehicle, which term took over from the "inside" and "outside" derived from stage coaches/early buses).

There may be more. There are certainly more on the periphery.....for example, in English it is not the agricultural "cow-catcher" but the nautical "life guard" beneath the platform of the tramcar. The use of bells and lamps and flags for signing and signalling also smacks of the sea. In Lisbon, certain tram routes flew flags, and the word for flag (*bandeira*) persists as a word for the route indicator. Wallasey trams flew flags to warn of bad weather (no ferries running), and the word flag is also used for the plate attached to a pole to mark a bus or tram stopping place.

A Road/Rail Interchange Problem

John Dunabin explores a problem of travel from over 150 years ago. His evidence a letter between husband and wife, which not only survived its initial journey, but was later preserved in print. We have edited the letter slightly.

Many accounts survive of lengthy journeys in England over the centuries, with descriptions of appalling roads, of wayside inns offering barely edible food and very inferior accommodation, of mishaps and even disasters, of damage and hardship only made tolerable by cheerful companions.

The advent of the railways in the second quarter of the 19th century was bound to bring a halt to their flow, and they now remain as reminders of the good - and bad - old days.

One such, dating from 1852, seems to me of particular interest, since it was written at a time when the railways had already ranged far and wide, but obviously not far enough. It is in the form of a letter from Jane Welsh Carlisle to her husband Thomas, the noted writer and historian. Before revealing its somewhat unusual contents it should be added that Jane, by then aged 50, far from young by the standards of the time, was said to have been both exceptionally clever and charming.

August 5, 1852.

You recollect, dear, that Macready told me of two routes, recommending that by Frome as the quickest and least fatiguing; so I rendered myself at the Paddington station on Friday morning, with my night things in a bag on one arm and my dog in a basket on the other. The journey to Frome was quite a rest after that morning's work (carrying down all the books from the top landing-place into the back parlour), and I descended from the train quite fresh for the thirty miles by coach.

But when I inquired about the coach to Sherborne, I was told there was none. "A coach passing through Sherborne passed through Frome without coming to the station at eleven in the morning." three hours before the time we were at; "no other since many months back." My first thought was "What a mercy you were not with me !" my next that the Macreadys could not blame me for keeping them waiting, and then I resolved not to stay all day and night at Frome, but to take a Yeovil coach, which started at five, and which could take me, I was told, to a wayside inn within eight miles of Sherborne, and there I hoped to find a fly "or something."

Meanwhile I would proceed to the town of

Frome, a mile from the station, and get something to eat, and even to drink, feeling it my duty to keep my heart up by all needful appliances. I left my little bag at the station, where the coach came, and set my dog quite free, and we pursued our way as calmly and naturally as if we had known where we were going.

Frome is a dull, dirty looking place, full of plumbers. I saw several inns, and chose "The George" for its name's sake. I walked in and asked to have some cold meat and a pint bottle of Guinness's porter. They showed me to an ill-aired parlour, and brought me some cold lamb that the flies had been buzzing round for a week - even Nero disdained to touch it. I ate bread, however, and drank all the porter, and the charge for that feeble refection was 2s. 6d. ! Already I had paid one pound eight and sixpence for the train. It was going to be a most unexpectedly costly journey to me. But for that reflection I could almost have laughed at my forlorn position there.

The inn and the town were so disagreeable that I went presently back to the station, preferring to wait there. One of the men who had informed me about the coach came to me, as I was sitting on a bench, and remarked on the beauty of the scene, especially of some scarlet beans growing in his own piece of garden. "Ah," he said, "I have lived in London and I have lived abroad. I have been here annd there, backwards and forwards, while I was in service with them as never could rest; but I am satisfied now that the only contentment for man is growing his own vegetable ! Look at them beans ! Well tomorrow they'll be ready and I'll be pulling them, and boiling them, and eating them - annd such a taste ! No agriculture like that in Piccadilly !"

Then he looked sympathisingly at me and said, "I'm going to get you somethinng you'll like, and thats a glass of cool, fresh, clear water." And he went away with a jug to his garden and fetched some water from a little spring well and a great handful of mignonette. "There ! there's something sweet for you, and here's splendid water, that you won't find the like of in Piccadilly !"

I had the coach all to myself for a while: then a young gentleman got in, who did exactly the right thing by me, neither spoke to me nor looked at me till we stopped at Castle Carey (Yeovil is pronounced Youghal, Carey Carry. I grew quite frightened that I had somehow been transported into Ireland). There the young gentleman went into the inn, and said to me first, "Excuse the liberty I take in asking, but would you take anything - a little wine and water ?" I thought that very polite; but I was to meet with something more exquisite still before I got to Sherborne. At the "Sparkford" Inn, eight miles from Sherborne, I got

out and asked, had they a fly ?

"Yes, but one of its wheels was broken, and it was gone to be mended !" "Had they any other conveyance that was whole - a gig or a cart ? " "Yes they had a nice little gig, and I should have the loan of a cloak to keep me warm " (The evening was rather chill). So I went in, and sat down in a parlour, where an old gentleman was finishing off with bread-and-cheese. He soon made himself master of my case, and regretted he was not going back to Sherborne that night, as then he would have taken me in his carriage, and presently he offered something else more practical, viz. to try and recover my parasol (my mother's, the one she bought with the sovereign you gave her, and which I had got new covered) left stupidly on the roof of the coach, and never recollected till the coach, with its four horses, had thundered past the window ! If the landlady would tell the coachman about it the next day, and get it there, he, the old gentleman, would bring it to Sherborne House. I went into the lobby to tell the landlady, some five or eight minutes after the coach had started, and told her, in the presence of a gentleman, who was preparing to start in a barouchette with two horses. He looked hard at me, but said nothing; and a minute or two after I saw him drive past the window. Some twenty minutes after I started myself, in a little gig, with a brisk little horse, and a silent driver. Nothing could be more pleasant than so pirling through quiet roads, in the dusk, with the moon coming out. I felt as if I were reading about myself in a Miss Austen novel. but it got beyond Miss Austen when, at the end of some three miles, before a sort of carrier's inn, the gentleman of the barouchette stepped into the middle of the road, making a sort of military signal to my driver, which he repeated with impatience when the man did not at once draw up. I sat confounded, expecting what he would do next. We had halted, the gentleman came to my side, and said, exactly as in a book:

Right: A business card from an inn with vehicles for hire, in the same fashion as the above mentioned *Sparkford Inn*, near Sherborne.

The Bull at Beaumaris (Anglesey) has more than one "bus" in its fleet of horse drawn conveyances, and such a large fleet suggests that people still crossed by boat to Beaumaris, and did not necessarily use the Telford Bridge, opened in 1826. The exact age of the card is not known

(Ron Phillips Collection)

"Madam, I have the happiness of informing you that I have reclaimed your parasol; and it lies here in my carriage waiting to be restored !" "But how on earth ?" I asked. "Madam, I judged that it would be more pleasing for you to take the parasol along with yourself than to trust to its being brought by the other gentleman; so I just galloped my horses, overtook the coach as it was leaving this court, reclaimed the parasol, and have waited here, knowing you could take no other road to Sherborne, for the happiness of presenting it to you !" - To an ostler - "Bring the parasol !" It was brought, and handed to me.

And then I found myself making a speech in the same style, caught by the infection of the thing. I said "Sir, this day has been full of mischances for me, but I regard the recovery of my parasol so unexpectedly as a good omen, and have a confidence that I shall now reach my destination in safety. Accept my thanks, though it is impossible to give any adequate expression to my sense of your courtesy !" I never certainly made so long and formal a speech in my life. And how I came to make it anything like it I can't imagine, unless it were under mesmerism. We bowed to each other like first cousins of Sir Charles Grandison, and I purred on. "Do you know that gentleman ?" I asked my driver. "Never saw him before."

I found Sherborne house without difficulty; and a stately beautiful house it was, and a kind welcome it had for me. I was able to make them all laugh with my adventures.....

..... The journey back by Dorchaester went all right, and was less expensive, for I came by the second class, and so saved the nine shillings my gig had cost me. It was a weary long way, however, from a quarter before nine till half after seven flying along in one shape or other, with only ten minutes delay (at Southampton)



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Large BUSES, BRAKE, LANDAUS, COVERED WAGGONETTES;
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HEARSE, VEHICLES of every description for Hire
on Reasonable Terms.

All Orders promptly attended to.
WILLIAMS BROTHERS, Proprietors.

J. R. Jones, Printer, Beaumaris.

BOOK REVIEW

HARPER'S 1894-1932 Recollections of Andrew Harper by his elder son, Hugh Geddes Harper, edited by Andrew Douglas Harper, grandson, and produced and printed by Andrew Jack Harper, great grandson. A4 spirally bound format, 56 pages, card covers, with black and white illustrations and several maps. 1992 Price and availability not known.

This book is remarkable in a number of ways. As can be seen above, it is clearly a record of family history, but one is spared dynastic details as it deals principally with the working life of Andrew Harper, "carrier and motor bus proprietor" of Broxburn and Peebles. It tells how he began in business in 1894 with a horse and a two wheeled cart, and three years later he married and built his own single storey stone house, with a yard and stables attached, in Main St., Broxburn. From these premises he later deployed "five horses, three lorries, two carts, a van and a gig." A later addition to the collection of vehicles was a van for furniture removals. This could be lifted onto a flat lorry, and after the load had been collected, it could be taken by train to any part of the country. In fact, Harper became an official railway carrier for the North British Railway.

The first motorised vehicle, a W.D. specification Albion, arrived in 1916, on the understanding that it could be repurchased at a moment's notice if required for military service, and after six months it was ! As a replacement, a Sentinel steam wagon (not suitable for W.D. service) was purchased and ran for four years before being replaced by a petrol engine ex W.D. Dennis. More internal combustion engine vehicles followed, but when Broxburn's main industrial plant (the oil works) closed down in the early twenties, the Harper family moved to Peebles to seek more work. No longer was there enough work for four carriers in Broxburn, and the family now built up a regular run between Peebles and Edinburgh and Leith. Early in 1923, a trip was made to London to buy a 20 seater bus: this was put on the road with a 16 year old driver and a 16 year old conductor.

Competition in the passenger field was such that a small 16 seater was specially purchased to act as a chaser or a blocker, and with hard work and careful selection of staff to avoid those who were unreliable (especially through drink) the firm prospered. In those days, lorry drivers delivering to shops and warehouses were often rewarded in kind, and this was often drink.....worse, many of those behind the wheel of commercial vehicles were young and inexperienced. By 1926 it was felt that the business would do best if the haulage side was sold, and the remaining

lorries were disposed of. The bus network which was developed consisted of a number of services local to Peebles, Peebles - Edinburgh with branches to Biggar, West Linton and Broughton, Walkerburn - Peebles - Biggar - Glasgow (about 60 miles), and from 1929 a route was opened from Edinburgh to Dumfries.

Bus operation introduced the family firm to ways of working which were a far cry from those of carrying with horses and carts; tyre maintenance by an outside contractor, fare collection systems not open to abuse by conductors (or passengers !), overnight servicing, customer relations. Tours and excursions from Peebles were offered. With such long routes, many men were recruited to work from outside the Peebles area, and vehicles had to be kept at distant outstations. Men were employed at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and in 1932 twelve buses were garaged at Hayfield Garage, Edinburgh, eight were kept at Peebles (Dovecot Road) and one vehicle stayed overnight at Biggar, Moffat, Dumfries and Glasgow respectively.

It was at this point that Andrew Harper (now nearing 70) decided to sell out the business to the Caledonian Omnibus Co. This took place on 19th January 1932, and later that year, 30th September, the S.M.T. Co. exchanged routes in the Carlisle area for the Peebles local services and the Glasgow route. Andrew Harper's sons took up administrative posts with the Caledonian. For a short time, the blue and yellow livery of Harpers was perpetuated, but then the scarlet of Caledonian took over. When the Glasgow service was first introduced, Harpers fitted a blue light on their buses so that the intending passenger could tell when the Harper's vehicle was approaching. This found disfavour with the police, and the lights were removed.

It is very interesting to be able to read the history of an operator involved in both haulage and passenger transport, although Harpers did not run the two modes concurrently for much time. The story is told "from the inside", so tends to dwell more on operational detail and personalities, rather than on vehicle data and route detail. Most of the many bus and lorry pictures are accompanied by captions which talk of the personnel depicted and the location at which the vehicle is found, rather than the type of bodywork fitted or the engine capacity. On the whole, a very worthwhile book which gives many insights into road transport in the border region of Scotland in the first third of the twentieth century.

ARP

Scottish Transport

In preparation for *Newsletter* is a look at haulage and passenger transport in Lanarkshire in the forties and fifties.

The Dump

Roy Larkin tells the story of
the Slough Disposals

When the Armistice was signed in 1918, the British War Office was left with a vast and largely redundant war machine. In addition to the 37,000 'subsidy' lorries purchased by the War Office during WW1, there were the commandeered lorries, buses, steamers, cars, motorcycles, tanks and spare parts, which were no longer required. Thousands of American lorries and those built by continental makers added to the total. Scattered from Northern France to Mesopotamia (Iraq) and North Africa were vehicles in every condition from brand new to derelict. All needed recovering and then disposal.

The small town of Slough in Berkshire (population 15,000) was chosen for the disposal site. Situated on the now A4 road some 25 miles west of London, it was also served by a mainline railway. The railway was important, not only for bringing prospective customers to the site but also for the delivery of war torn vehicles.

Bordering the A4 Bath Road, on the western outskirts of the town, the 600 acre site was established with covered workshops and new housing for the incoming additional workforce. It quickly became known simply as 'The Dump' by local inhabitants. By February 1921, the site had increased to 640 acres, (with 100 acres being covered workshops) and two hundred new houses. Special trains were run from London and Reading for the commuting workers. Slough would never again be the small country town it had been.

Seventeen thousand vehicles had accumulated at Slough by early 1920. The War Office, more used to running a war than a commercial business, was finding its position increasingly impossible. The Treasury was demanding speedier liquidation of the stock to replenish the coffers. Business demanded more transport and the press and public were demanding that something be done with the increasing and very visible assets held at Slough, which were wasting away. Equally, politicians and lorry makers were applying pressure not to flood the market with war surplus stock. Employment in the motor industry was only ten per cent of that during the war years and there was a very real risk of destroying the motor industry altogether.

To avert mounting scandal and an increasingly untenable position for the War Office, a new company The Slough Trading Company Ltd, was formed.

This company, started with a share capital of £1,000 and took over the Slough Depot in its entirety, including all the vehicles yet to be recovered from abroad. This arrangement also included a deal to purchase all Government surplus vehicles for the following two years. The Slough depot had effectively been privatised and put on a commercial footing.

The company was started by Noel Mobbs (later Sir Noel), grandfather of the present chairman of Slough Estates plc., and Sir Percival Perry (later Lord Perry), formerly the head of Henry Ford's British operations. Mr S.A. Wallace, who was in charge of the depot for the Government, was retained as the general manager.

The company, trading as Slough Lorries and Components Ltd, continued to operate 'The Dump' until 1925. From as early as February 1921, plans were being made to develop the site as a trading estate, using the Trafford Park estate in Manchester as the model. As the space needed for vehicle disposal decreased, the land and workshops were converted to factories for renting to interested companies.

In 1925 the last remaining AEC and Peerless vehicles were sold to Peerless Trading Co Ltd and Slough Trading Estate was complete. The company changed its name to Slough Estates Ltd and it still owns and manages the site and numerous other industrial and retail sites world-wide.

The War Office had been formulating plans for the disposal of surplus vehicles from as early as 1916, but no scheme had been adopted by the 1918 Armistice. Some vehicles were disposed of to individuals and private companies, through weekly auction sales at Earls Court in London. Many of these were returned to the maker for re-furbishing, although most were bought by the makers themselves.

Realising the effect on their business of the massive influx of vehicles to the market place and anxious to preserve their reputations against second rate refurbishment, by unauthorised repairers, the makers were keen to buy back their own lorries. In addition to their own vehicles flooding the market, there were also vast numbers of American lorries to be disposed of.

The makers had to negotiate with the Ministry of Munitions and then the Disposals Board to buy back their vehicles. Despite this protracted procedure, the Government disposed of vehicles to the value of £1,500,000, between the Armistice and the contract with the Slough Trading Company. One, unnamed, major manufacturer alone bought back 900 vehicles at £380 each.

In June 1920, three months after Slough Trading Co took over, the weekly sales were moved to

new showrooms alongside the A4 in Slough. The showrooms were open throughout the week for the sale of vehicles in all conditions. Many were sold as derelicts with the understanding that all the parts necessary for refurbishment were also available from the Slough Depot at advantageous prices.

The volume and variety of trade at these auction sales can be gauged from, admittedly scarce, sales figures. In June 1920, re-conditioned Garrett steam lorries sold for prices ranging from 410 to 440 guineas. Three 5-Ton Commer vans realised 115, 165 and 285 guineas, reflecting the various conditions of vehicles offered for sale. Spares sold included a Saurer radiator for £5.00 and unused crankshafts for £2.10.00. In total, the sale realised £20,000 for the Slough organisation.

With the major British makers buying their lorries back direct from the Government, there was, initially at least, a shortage of British lorries available at Slough. The Slough company turned most of its workshops over to re-furbishing the American Peerless 4-Ton lorry.

The Slough Lorries and Components Co exhibited two Peerless lorries at the Olympia motor show in 1921. These were with a standard cargo body and a hand tipping body. Although sold as re-furbished, with a six month guarantee, they were effectively brand new, as all moving parts were replaced with new parts from the stock of spares held at Slough. In all, Slough Lorries and Components, re-furbished three thousand Peerless lorries.

The details of the contract between the Disposals Board and Slough Trading Company have yet to be established. It would appear, though, that negotiations between the Government and The Slough Trading Company were kept secret until the contract was signed.

In March 1923, Captain Curzon questioned the price of £70 or less that the Disposals Board realised from The Slough Trading Company and whether the lorry manufacturers had been offered the same terms. Why the Disposals Board preferred to sell to a new company with just £460 paid up capital, instead of to established companies.

Major Boyd-Carpenter, the Financial Secretary for the Government, replied that it was not considered "in the public interest" to furnish information as to prices realised.

In April 1923, Sir Edward Manville, the Unionist M.P. for Coventry questioned the position of the motor manufacturers at the time of the Slough contract. He cited the sale of lorries by the Slough Trading Company at just £72 each, when, only three weeks before the contract was entered into, a manufacturer had paid £380 for 200 of the same vehicles.

Major Boyd-Carpenter replied for the Government that on one hand the Disposals Board was criticised for not disposing of stock quickly enough and on the other it was criticised for disposing of stock too cheaply.

Further questions were asked as to why, with the motor trade struggling for survival, that vast numbers of American lorries were returned to Slough and into the marketplace.

The scale of the operation at Slough can only be imagined. On 11 November 1918, the War Office had available 56,659 lorries and tractors, 23,133 cars and motor vans, 7,045 motor ambulances, 34,865 motorcycles and spare parts valued at 6.5 million pounds. The final disposal of stock was not completed until 1925 when the last remaining 1000 Peerless and several hundred AEC lorries were sold to the Peerless Trading Company.

PEERLESS

1925-1933

Notes by the Editor

It is of interest to trace the continued history of the Peerless marque. Once independent, the lorries were marketed as Peerless Trader or Trader, to make a distinction between the American model and the British copy. By 1930 new options were pneumatic tyres on the front axle, and a Gardner 4LW or a Meadows six cylinder engine. Chassis were upgraded by re-inforcement to take greater payloads. However, chain drive and solid tyres on the rear axle were features which saw the end of the marque in 1933, a victim of depressed trade and the regulations brought in by the Road Traffic Act 1930.

LIBERTY

U.S. Army Truck

Notes by R.W.Kidner

Mr. R.W.Kidner (of the Railway and Canal Historical Society) has written to *Newsletter* about the item on page 9 of Issue 21, which featured the United States Army Liberty truck, as depicted on a postcard view of Antwerp Docks.

Remarkably, Mr. Kidner remembers seeing such vehicles still in active service in Belgium at the end of the Second World War.

It is curious that historians generally choose to concentrate upon the political outcomes of wars, when one of the major legacies is often a great improvement in communications, although this outcome is not always immediate. Currently the Danube is blocked at Novisad (Yugoslavia). What new land links will emanate from this situation?

IMAGES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Bedford OB bus



John Hibbs' nomination for this page is the Bedford OB. Although first introduced in 1939, it was quickly replaced by its utility counterpart the OWB and did not reappear until 1946. It was then an extremely popular choice with operators big and small for the next six years until it was superseded by the SB series. It subsequently lasted as a workhorse in independent fleets for many more years and became a "classic", especially when fitted with Duple 'Vista' 29 seat coach bodywork as seen above. This example began life with British European Airways, passed to Liverpool Corporation as an airport coach, and finally operated for Vagg of Knockin Heath, in whose fleet it is seen here.

The model was also widely used overseas, where many were converted to forward control. Below is seen an OB waiting for passengers at a railway station in northern Portugal, fitted with an all-metal 27 seat body of Portuguese construction, and which is somewhat wider than allowed in the British Isles. The normal power unit in the OB was the Bedford petrol engine, but some users substituted this with a Perkins diesel engine, as in the case with the vehicle depicted.

The concluding back page feature in this series in *Newsletter 23* will feature the diesel engine, which was brought into use and perfected (?) during the century, and as we enter the 21st century it remains unchallenged in buses and trucks.

Photos by Ron Phillips

