

# ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

## HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

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**COVER PICTURE** Saltney, Chester (See page

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## CONFERENCE MATTERS

22nd September 2001

### 20th BUSINESS MEETING

Professor John Hibbs opened the meeting by announcing the sad news of the death of his former colleague Arthur Lainson of Premier Travel on 17th September. Born in December 1911, Mr. Lainson had become an important figure in the bus industry in East Anglia, and the ethos of the Premier Travel business was encapsulated in the two mottos used - 'Support Independent Enterprise', seen on all the publicity, and 'You don't work *for* us, you work *with* us' seen on all staff communications. The Conference observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

The first item of business was the formal announcement of the appointment of Garry Turvey as President. John Hibbs recounted the meeting held with him in August, the decision to appoint for a fixed period, to be extended by mutual agreement, and the role that the new President would play. John also read out the letters he had written to Professor Theo Barker, our Past President, and his wife.

John now turned to the fact that the R&RTHC was about to celebrate its tenth anniversary, and that there was to be a meeting preceding the Colloquium at Derby on 3rd November at which the Standing Committee and the new President would discuss ways to celebrate this milestone.

John also raised the issue of "small" societies who should be encouraged to form part of R&RTHC, and whether or not we should charge an "intermediate" rate of subscription to such bodies. Some of these organisations had relatively few members and dealt with very specific matters - such were the Crosville Archive Trust of whom a delegate was to attend the Colloquium, and the Sheffield Bus Museum, a representative of which was present at the Business Meeting. There were also numerous small museums and heritage trusts in various parts of the country.

Both the above issues were taken up again by other speakers. Grahame Boyes and Ian Yearsley spoke of some of the "small" groups which are potential members. Roger Cragg questioned whether we did enough to justify the word "Roads" in our title. John concluded his remarks by raising a series of topics under the heading "Some new areas for study", which are reprinted in this Newsletter, and he asked whether we should provide a way of publicising "work in progress" by our members.

Professor John Armstrong next gave a progress

report on the Companion to British Road Freight Transport, the working party for which is currently meeting monthly. The draft, which was available at the meeting for inspection, now contains 473 items, and occupies 285 pages. Illustrations are to be selected soon, but there are still more items to be written. The Science Museum is pleased with the progress made.

There is to be the first ever published bibliography of books devoted to goods haulage by road as an appendix. In response to a question, it was made clear that the launch of the book, probably to take place at the Science Museum in London, will be given some publicity.

Once again, the members of the working party drew attention to the reluctance of many who showed an interest in freight transport to disclose information or put pen to paper.

Roger Atkinson, Hon. Treasurer, reported on the R&RTHC finances, and on subscribers to the Colloquium. He raised the issue of a recent piece of publicity, in which there had been some confusion over the use of the word "Conference" in our title. There was a short discussion on this, and Ron Phillips made the suggestion that as we were soon to celebrate our tenth anniversary, it would be an appropriate time to change our title if that was the wish of the membership. A show of hands indicated that the word "Conference" might well be replaced by the word "Association", and it is proposed to formally table this suggestion at the AGM next February, subject to further discussion by the Standing Committee in November.

Ron Phillips then spoke of the Newsletter and the balance of its contents. He reminded the Conference that items for publication were always welcome, and in particular suitable illustrations. He referred to an earlier point regarding our coverage of "roads", and gave an instance of how membership of the R&RTHC had made him aware of the importance of the surface of roads when writing on the subject of early forms of public passenger transport. (In fact, the choice of cover picture for this issue illustrates this.)

Ian Yearsley, Hon Research Editor, gave us a fascinating report on an issue raised recently at the Beamish Museum. This open-air museum aims to turn back the clock to the year 1913, and has four trams and an open top bus in service. There is also a working trolleybus (ex Newcastle) but as it is from a later period, it is not normally in service. Recently, the museum acquired a single deck solid-tyred trolley bus, formerly Keighley Corporation No. 12 of 1924, which is to be restored and which would be a suitable vehicle to place in regular service. When removing the body from the chassis, it was revealed that there

was a (long-disused) form of pneumatic suspension between the body and chassis, known as the "Holden Pneumatic Suspension."

Ian described how he had been asked to search for further information, some of which he displayed on the screen. He showed how the system worked, by inserting an inflated rubber hose in a special channel between body and chassis (illustrated in *Motor Transport* 20/11/23) and quoted other users or potential users of the system as Ashton-under-Lyne, York, Keighley and Birmingham, and Liverpool who discussed using the system on trams. (see *Liverpool Transport* by Horne & Maund, Vol 2). The system was short lived, mainly because it was overtaken by development of the pneumatic tyre for heavy vehicles. It is intended to restore the system of "Pneumatic Load Suspension" on the preserved Keighley vehicle.

The moral of the tale ? When the trolleybus was dismantled, the restorers did not know what the system of rubber pipe suspension was. Now that they have been told, this unusual system is to be restored.

There followed some general discussion on research topics. Grahame Boyes mentioned the "Access to Archives" web-site, which is said to have over one million items listed, Roger Atkinson made reference to some recent research regarding the Bell Punch Company, involving work on the internet combined with a happy discovery in Italy of an American Directory. David Harmon (of the TTS) had copies of a working paper based on our "Getting into Research" Symposium of 1999. These were offered to all those present.

John Hibbs reported on a meeting held to discuss whether the R&RTHC should produce a Companion to British Road Passenger Transport. It has been decided that the project should go forward, with active support from the Omnibus Society and the PSV Circle. There was to be a further meeting to discuss a possible editor and formation of a working party (this would not be the same as that for the present Companion) It was stressed that the new work was a long-term project.

#### Any other business

It was pointed out that the British Road Federation had been wound up, although possibly some of its functions/archive/library might now be vested with the CBI. It was felt that further clarification should be sought (The B.R.F. was briefly a Corporate Member of R&RTHC).

The National Tramway Museum now trades as "Crich Tramway Village" and has enjoyed an increase in visitors this season. Ian stressed that the new name is purely for publicity purposes.

Gordon Knowles then announced that our Minutes Secretary, Gordon Mustoe, will not be able to continue in office in 2002, and that a new volunteer for this office is *urgently required*. The meeting broke up for lunch at 1 p.m.

A date was fixed for the 2002 AGM and the next Business Meeting of the R&RTHC: this is to be **Saturday, 9th February 2002** at the Museum of British Road Transport Coventry.

In the afternoon there were three presentations by members. John Dunabin spoke on the subject of early night sleeper coach services (see this issue on pages 14-5), David Harmon spoke on early forms of mechanised ticket issue (his talk will appear in a future newsletter) and Grahame Boyes spoke of the decline in the use of horses in London, showing the statistics for bus horses, cab horses, and horses for general transport of goods. Whereas the first two categories disappeared at about the time of the First World War, the latter group survived into the early fifties. Again, this subject will form the basis of a future article.

Professor John Hibbs thanked all three of our speakers and said how enjoyable he had found the day's proceedings. (A sentiment echoed by all those present). John also expressed our thanks to the MBRT for hosting our meeting once again, and it was explained that the announced tour "behind the scenes" at the Museum had been postponed owing to current building work. Delegates were pleased with the recent changes to the catering arrangements. The service of tea and coffee at the start of our meeting and in the afternoon break was much improved, and the cafeteria now serves a new Menu at attractive prices. Management of the cafeteria is now with the Friends of the Museum.

Before departing, those present were reminded of the urgent need for a new Minutes Secretary. The duties assigned are to keep a record of our twice yearly meetings, and to prepare this for distribution.

## COVER PICTURE

This picture of the Chester Corporation tram terminus at Saltney was taken looking down from the overbridge of the Chester - Wrexham railway line in January 1905.

The most significant feature of this picture is the road surface, water-bound macadam which has become currogated by the wheels of vehicles. At this point, only the area surrounding the tram rails was sett paved. Because the camera is looking down, we are aware of the currogations made by the wheels of passing traffic, which at this time would be mainly horse drawn. The road is an important one: it was to

become the A55, the main route from Chester into North Wales via Canway (where it joins with the A5). In fact, the Welsh border is situated just behind the camera position at Boundary Lane, which runs at this point alongside the railway line.

Chester buses, replacing the trams, were extended under the railway to West View, Saltney, and therefore Chester Corporation vehicles ran in both England and Wales.

When Chester purchased the existing horse tramway of The Chester Tramways Company in 1902, it was decided to reconstruct the line for electric working to a narrower gauge. This was to save money in paving the mile or so of track at the outer end of the line along the road shown.

## News from the 21st Century New British Vehicle Registration System,

With effect from 1st September 2001 a new system for registering vehicles in this country has been introduced. The previous scheme, with modifications at various dates, was commenced in 1904.

The new scheme introduces new letter codes for the various districts covered by each of the Local Vehicle Licensing Offices. These are listed on the right, and the letters form the first element of the new plates carried by vehicles.

The second numerical element is to denote the period of issue, commencing with 51 for the period September 2001-February 2002, the following six monthly period will use 01, then 52,02,53,03 etc.

Finally, the third element consisting of three letters is issued at random. New plates take the form of

GB EA51 GHJ

At the left there is a space (optional) to display the letters denoting the country of origin, or the stars symbol of Europe. To allow for this feature, the legal size of the letters to be used on number plates has been reduced in width, giving the new plates a slightly cramped look.

It seems that the rather silly (but lucrative to the government and certain dealers) practice of making plates which form words or 'near' words is to continue. A recent change to plates in Spain precludes the use of vowels, thus avoiding this

### BRITISH REGISTRATION MARKS (commencing September 2001)

AA-AN	Peterborough
AO-AU	Norwich
AV-AY	Ipswich
BA-BY	Birmingham
CA-CO	Cardiff
CP-CV	Swansea
CW-CY	Bangor
DA-DK	Chester
DL-DY	Shrewsbury
EA-EY	Chelmsford
FA-FP	Nottingham
FR-FY	Lincoln
GA-GO	Maidstone
GP-GY	Brighton
HA-HJ	Bournemouth
HK-HY	Portsmouth
HW	Isle of Wight
KA-KL	Luton
KM-KY	Northampton
LA-LJ	London (Wimbledon)
LK-LT	London (Stanmore)
LU-LY	London (Sidcup)
NA-NO	Newcastle
NP-NY	Stockton
OA-OY	Oxford
PA-PT	Preston
PU-PY	Carlisle
RA-RY	Reading
SA-SJ	Glasgow
SK-SO	Edinburgh
SP-ST	Dundee
SU-SW	Aberdeen
SX-SY	Inverness
VA-VY	Worcester
WA-WJ	Exeter
WK-WL	Truro
WM-WY	Bristol
YA-YK	Leeds
YL-YU	Sheffield
YV-YY	Beverley

## PORTRAIT OF A FAMILY FIRM

### Jack Oakes and Sons Furniture Removals Kidderminster

The following account has been written as part of a family history, and illustrates the sources usually consulted by family historians.

My great grandfather Thomas Oakes and his wife Matilda (Savill) supposedly began this business which was originally known as Oakes'. The business was always advertised as being established in 1853, but, in 1854 when Thomas and Matilda married, Thomas' occupation was a weaver.

In the 1861 Census of Kidderminster, Thomas Oakes was listed as an unemployed weaver. In the 1871 and 1881 Census, Thomas is shown as a Furniture Broker. He died in 1883 aged 58 years. He left his widow, Matilda, two daughters and three sons, Frederick (22) Thomas (16) and John (12).

The 1888 Kelly's Directory of Kidderminster shows Thomas Oakes as a Furniture Broker. (This may have been an old entry or replaced the father by the son). In the 1892 Kelly's Directory Mrs Matilda Oakes was listed as a Furniture Broker, while son Thomas was now a new Haulier. I believe that it was at about this time that the furniture moving business came into being.

By the time of the 1891 Census of Kidderminster, Matilda and elder son Frederick were now Furniture Dealers, Thomas was still a Haulier, and my grandfather John (now aged 19) was a Horse Driver.

It is known in the family that Matilda was a very respected business woman in Kidderminster, who had a good knowledge of antique furniture. She died in 1909 aged 80. The "Kidderminster Shuttle" of October 16th 1909 states that - "She was well known in the town and district, and held in high esteem. Over half a century ago she married Mr Thos. Oakes, who was then a carpet weaver. They embarked in the business of furniture dealers and house furnishers, and established a wide and lucrative connection. Mrs Oakes possessed excellent judgment and great activity. She was a prominent figure at Auction Sales in Kidderminster and District, and was most upright in all her dealings. Her husband died 26yrs. ago and she carried on the business for many years, her son Mr Councilor Frederick Oakes, rendering much help in the development of the business".

Kelly's Directory of Kidderminster 1912 shows John Oakes as a cabinet maker and Furnisher,

and Thomas Oakes as a Furniture Dealer. John had now moved to new premises at 63 Dudley Street, Kidderminster where they built a large warehouse for storage of carpets, chairs, tables and other items which were hired out for weddings. This area was later used for storage of furniture for either a long or short term. My grandfather John Oakes married Sophia Robinson in 1893 and they had one daughter and four sons. It was about 1915 when they purchased their first motorised vehicle which was a Ford lorry (described by my mother as a runabout), without a cover.

The 1928 Kelly's Directory of Kidderminster now shows Jack Oakes, as a furniture dealer of 63 Dudley Street, a John Oakes as a Cabinet Maker of 33 Church Street, and Thomas Oakes now a Second Hand Furniture Dealer of 17 Churchfields, Kidderminster. Jack and John Oakes were the same person, with two separate businesses. Unfortunately my grandfather died in July 1934 aged 55 years.

John Oakes' wife Sophia and the three youngest sons, Jack, Fred and Joe continued the furniture removal business now known as Jack Oakes & Sons, Furniture Removers, 63 Dudley Street, Kidderminster, and listed in the 1936 Kelly's Directory as this. Their uncle Thomas Oakes was still listed as a second hand furniture dealer.

By 1940 the two youngest sons were involved in WW2, Fred in the Army and Joe in the Air Force. My father Jack continued to run the business with his mother and sister throughout the war years. The business by now had two Bedford pantechicons, one of which was commandeered by the army, leaving one for the business. Throughout this time my father was often required to transport The BBC Midland Light Orchestra from place to place. I believe he also transported Joe Loss and his Band. Also the van was used as the safe transport for the collection of money raised at the Kidderminster Annual Carnival, and by the Post Office for the parcel deliveries at Christmas. My father never came home until ALL the parcels had been delivered on Christmas Day, sometimes as late as noon.

I remember through my childhood the old Bedford pantechicons in bright blue paint with Jack Oakes & Sons, Kidderminster in large white letters on the side. On the area above the cab, and on the rear of the van it simply said "Oakes of Kidderminster". On each door it gave the address and telephone number '2360'. Our family was always amused by the "Jack Oakes and Sons" because our parents only had three daughters. My sisters and I remember two different Bedford vans. The one used through the war years was the model with the engine out front, and only a small cab. This was replaced after the war with three flat fronted model Bedfords,

with the engine in the centre front of the cab and a small extra seat in front of the passenger window. I think the firm stayed with Bedford vans until the early 1950s.

At the end of WW2 my uncles Fred and Joe returned home and re-entered the family business. As mentioned above they were now able to purchase three pantechnicons and were very busy. The only other local competitor was Winwoods Ltd. But the Oakes family always had a good working relationship with Pickfords and always put their overseas business with them.

By the early 1950s there were some family disagreements and my grandmother, now nearly 80, decided they must sell the business. Also the local council were planning to build a ring road, which would pass through the Dudley Street premises. The business was sold, but my uncle Joe Oakes was the new owner. He bought the business with money loaned to him by his mother and sister.

My father and uncle Fred were no longer involved with the business. My grandmother died in 1954 aged 82. The name of the business remained the same but it was relocated to new premises at Lisle Avenue, Kidderminster. My uncle Joe sold the business when he retired in 1977.

The business continued until it was sold and re-named. I believe it is now Standard Motor Transport Ltd. of Lisle Avenue, Foley Park, Kidderminster.

## BOOK REVIEW

**HORSE OMNIBUS**, by Roy Shadwell, 48pp, A5, published by Peter Wooler (1994) £5.95.  
ISBN 0 9517961 4 6

The horse bus only appeared on London's streets a few years before Queen Victoria came to the throne, and it was already beginning to disappear a decade before her death, but the ways of its drivers, conductors, and even passengers, had already passed into popular culture. By now they have become folklore, as such tending to obscure the realities, fascinating enough in themselves. Serious students of transport may still be able to present more about its economic and social aspects, but at the popular end of the scale little, it would appear, remains to be said.

In this small book, while making no direct attempt to identify or examine the whys and the wherefores of London's travellers in the 19th century, or to describe any original research, Roy Shadwell has brought together a great deal of anecdotal evidence, with numerous graphical illustrations, and quite a number of hard facts.

In his foreword, Mr. Shadwell makes it clear that he has occasionally had to choose between conflicting accounts (his bibliography bears witness to the fact that he has not just relied upon one source) and he apologises for any errors he has perpetrated. It should be stated, however, that for anybody like this reviewer not already steeped in the subject, his book makes an excellent refresher course, and, a good read.

The illustrations, photographs and drawings, many of them rarely if ever seen until now, add to the enjoyment. Most of them have been contributed by Robert E. Jowitt, the former perhaps better known for his photographs of buses and trolleybuses on the continent, often partly obscured by attractively mini-skirted young ladies. Nothing like that can be found here; even with decency boards to preserve their modesty, young Victorian ladies did not appear in public dressed like that.

JED

## Free Bus Rides For Workers ?

A recent Inland Revenue consultation paper, we are told, suggests that millions of workers should have free bus travel paid for by their employers. Such travel arrangements "would reduce congestion and improve the environment, and would be of benefit to local bus networks". To facilitate the proposals, tax changes will be brought in in April 2002.

The "works bus" is now largely dead, but there were once employers who operated substantial fleets of buses for their workers, particularly building contractors. Sir Alfred MacAlpine, Wimpey, Tarmac, Laing, Taylor Woodrow were some of many who spring to mind. The vehicles were usually cast-offs from the large bus operators, which ran for two or three years before being replaced, but which did receive a livery of their new owners. A better class of bus was purchased new by certain employers who moved out of town to what is now known as a "green field" site, and who provided bus transport for those who previously had no long journey to make. One was Hales Cakes, another a bus builder itself, was Metro Cammell at Birmingham which ran its workers to its second factory at Elmdon. The practice can be traced back at least as far as the twenties, but it was not a general country-wide practice.

During the Second World War, it became common for large industrial sites to be served by special workers services provided in general by the major bus companies. Mining areas such as Co.Durham and South Wales also had widespread services provided by independent companies, some of which solely operated such routes.

ARP



# THE BRITISH BUS AND COACH INDUSTRY Some Key Dates by John Hibbs

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1625 app</b> Hackney coaches appear. It was used to ply for hire, finding work through the day, spreading fixed costs over more customers. they were the origin of the taxi and the urban bus.</p> <p><b>1650 app</b> Stage coaches appear, operating on a fixed route and generally requiring pre booking. A network developed over the whole country.<br/>Later the <u>short stage</u> services appeared in the conurbations. Those who could not afford stage coaches could choose to ride the <u>stage wagon</u> along with the goods.</p> <p><b>1662</b> Blaise Pascal introduced the "Carosse à cinq sous", the original "omnibus" in Paris. It was later discontinued.</p> <p><b>1784</b> The GPO introduced the first <u>Mail Coach</u>, between London, Bath and Bristol, and a network of these superior services followed. Fares were higher than those for stage coaches.</p> <p><b>1828</b> The "omnibus" was introduced to Paris by Stanislaus Baudry. The principle of the new form of transport was to combine plying for hire, like a Hackney, with <u>scheduled operation</u> like a stage coach (It appears to have been introduced first in Nantes by a M. Omnes, to bring people to his store called "Omnes Omnibus")</p> <p><b>1829</b> Omnibuses introduced to London by George Shillibeer. they were an immediate success and were copied all over the city, and subsequently in cities elsewhere.</p> <p><b>1832</b> <b>STAGE CARRIAGE ACT</b> made omnibus services legal, classifying the vehicle as a Hackney.</p> | <p><b>1847</b> <b>TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT</b> gave Hackney licensing powers to Local Authorities,</p> <p><b>1851</b> The <u>Great Exhibition</u> acted a a stimulus for the development of omnibus services in London.<br/><u>Thomas Tilling</u> set up as a jobmaster in London</p> <p><b>1855</b> <u>Compagnie Generale des Omnibus de Londres</u> formed in Paris. It acquired many omnibus businesses, but remained part of the system of Associations (route cartels) by which the London industry was organised.</p> <p><b>1859</b> CGOL was "naturalised" as the <u>London General Omnibus Co.(LGOC)</u></p> <p><b>1860</b> <u>First British tramway</u> (horse-drawn) opened in Birkenhead.</p> <p><b>1870</b> <b>TRAMWAYS ACT</b> Gave powers to Local Authorities to construct (but not work) tramways, powers of veto over proposals by others, powers of compulsory purchase at residual value at a later date, operator required to maintain the road surface between and either side of the rails.</p> <p><b>1883</b> Huddersfield became the first municipal tramway operator (steam trams) after failing to find a company to operate on the lines it had laid.</p> <p><b>1885</b> First British electric tramway opened in Blackpool.</p> <p><b>1889</b> <b>2nd TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT.</b> Extended Local Authority powers to licence omnibus services.</p> <p><b>1896</b> <b>LOCOMOTIVES ON THE HIGHWAYS ACT.</b> Raised speed limits for "motor cars" and enabled the development of motor omnibus services.<br/><b>LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT</b><br/>Provided easier means for the building of tramways.<br/>Formation of the British Electric Traction Company (BET)</p> <p><b>1898</b> First motor bus services in Edinburgh</p> |
|--|---|

1899	First motor bus service in London		calling at intermediate towns (the same route as the first mail coach). By 1930 a network had developed covering most of England and Wales, but little development took place in Scotland. Many small firms involved.
1903	First <u>municipal</u> bus service in Eastbourne. First <u>Railway</u> motor bus services by GWR in Cornwall		
1905	London - Brighton service opened, with open top double deck buses.	1927	Date for the introduction of the first commercially viable covered-top double deck motor bus; an effective competitor for the tramcar in cities.
1906	Handcross Disaster (fatal accident) on London - Brighton service delays further development		
1911	LGOC purchased by Underground Group.	1928	<b>RAILWAY(ROADTRANSPORT)ACTS</b> prompted by the 'big four' companies (GWR, LMSR, LNER and SR), giving powers to operate road motor services.
1912	Pooling arrangements between Tilling and LGOC		Speed limits for buses on pneumatic tyres increased from 12mph to 20mph.
1913	LGOC/BET/Tilling settlement BET London fleet limited LGOC confined to 30 mile radius of Charing Cross	1929	LNER bid for ownership of United Automobile, the largest independent, leads to settlement brokered by Sir J F Heaton, Chairman of Tillings, and strengthens the Provincial Combine. Railway companies to hold maximum 49% of shares in 'associated' bus companies; subsequently they invested heavily in the industry.
1914	Last London horse bus		
1916	Underground complete effective control of trams/tubes/buses (the London Combine) BET and Tilling agree to "Area Agreements" dividing up territory outside London (the Provincial Combine)		Tillings and BET form joint holding company (Tilling & British Automobile Traction -
1917	First substitution of motor buses for electric trams (Sheerness)		T&BAT) to own some but not all of the area companies in England and Wales (and one in Scotland).
1920	First municipal tramway abandonment; of gas-powered cars (Neath)	1929	Scottish Motor Traction reaches similar agreement with LMSR and LNER and establishes Scottish Combine.
1922	Independent firms ('pirates') reappear in London, following poor service provided by the Combine.	1929	Royal Commission on Transport established, Chairman Sir Arthur Griffith-Boscawen. Second report largely endorses draft licensing Bill.
1924	<b>LONDON TRAFFIC ACT</b> imposed quantity control on London bus operation; most independents sold to the Combine	1930	<b>ROAD TRAFFIC ACT</b> Chiefly involving use of cars, with extensive licensing clauses not seriously debated. Replaced Town Police Clauses system with nation-wide control by Regional Traffic Commissioners. Introduced quality licensing, quantity and
1924	First substitution of motor buses for municipal trams (Kilmarnock) Keighley municipal trams replaced by trolleybuses two days before.		
1925	First long-distance express coach service, Bristol to London, year-round		



- price control, and gave existing operators route monopolies. Many smaller firms sold to area agreement companies, strengthening the combines still further. Area agreement acquired most of the independent express coach operations as the Depression hot profitability.
- 1930 First diesel engine bus in municipal service (Sheffield)
- 1931 Final Report of the Royal Commission Speed limit for buses on pneumatic tyres increased from 20 mph - 30 mph.
- 1932 Last known horse-bus ceased to operate, in Suffolk.
- 1933 **LONDON PASSENGER TRANSPORT ACT** Converted Underground group into a public monopoly (London Passenger Transport Board - LPTB), with compulsory purchase of LCC tramways, Metropolitan Railway, Tilling and BET London fleets and remaining independents; pooling with main line railway companies' suburban services.
- 1942 Tilling and BET separate - ownership of T&BAT companies divided.
- 1947 Nationalisation of the electricity supply industry led to the transfer of the Midland Electric Supply group, including bus subsidiaries, to the British Transport Commission (after an interval); thus providing the first state-owned element of bus transport.
- TRANSPORT ACT** Nationalisation of railway companies (thus transferring their bus company shares to the British Transport Commission - BTC); further nationalisation to be by way of 'Area Schemes'. LPTB became an executive of BTC. Effective January 1948.
- 1948 Tilling companies sold to BTC.
- 1949 SMT companies sold to BTC.
- 1949 Announcement of first area scheme, for the North East; opposition from Labour controlled councils owning trams and buses.
- 1950 Red & White United companies sold to BTC.
- 1953 Thesiger Report published - no criticism of licensing system.
- TRANSPORT ACT** Nationalisation powers withdrawn. Area schemes abandoned.
- 1957 First, and so far only, national strike - independent and municipal fleets exempted.
- 1961 Jack Report on rural transport (and similar report for highlands and Islands) published.  
No action taken.
- 1962 **TRANSPORT ACT** BTC wound up. Former Tilling and SMT companies transferred to new Transport Holding Company (THC). London Transport Executive (set up in 1947, previously London Passenger Transport Board) became London Transport Board.
- 1968 **TRANSPORT ACT** THC companies transferred to newly formed National Bus Company (NBC) and Scottish Bus Group (SBG). BET companies acquired at this time and transferred to NBC. Four Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) set up, with Executives (PTE's), to acquire local authority fleets in their areas, and with authority for further purchases. Local and central government given powers of subsidy. PTAs were -
- Merseyside
  - South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire (SELNEC)
  - Tyneside
  - West Midlands
- Merseyside and Tyneside entered into operating agreements with NBC companies in their area; SELNEC and West Midlands use authority to negotiate purchase, acquiring some NBC operations, but few private firms.

**1969 LONDON TRANSPORT ACT**  
London Transport Board transferred to Greater London Council as (once again) London Transport Executive. County Area (green) buses transferred to NBC.

**1972 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT**  
Metropolitan Counties set up, and made PTAs under

the 1968 Act. Two new PTAs thus formed, with boundary changes to others. PTAs now became -

Merseyside

Greater Manchester

South Yorkshire

Tyne & Wear

West Midlands

West Yorkshire

'Non-metropolitan' or 'shire' county councils given extensive powers of co-ordination, and required to appoint Coordinating Officers.

Took effect 01.04.74.

**1972 Greater Glasgow PTA set up, under 1968 Act.**

**1973 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT** Regional Councils acquired bus operating powers of within the region, but only within the existing local authority boundaries.  
Took effect May 1975.

**1980 Greater Glasgow PTA/PTE renamed Strathclyde.**

**1980 TRANSPORT ACT** Route licensing abolished for long-distance services; price control removed from all bus and coach operation; shifted the burden of proof to the objector to show there was reason not to grant a local route license; establish three areas in which route licensing for local services was suspended.

**1984 LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT ACT** Provided for tendering for London Bus Services, with ownership transferred from GLC to the new London Regional Transport, responsible to the Ministry of Transport.

**1985 TRANSPORT ACT** 'Deregulation' local bus services (i.e. removed route licensing system; many new regulations introduced). 'Privatised' the industry - NBC and SBG companies sold; PTE operations and local authority fleets transferred to 'arms-length' companies with a view to sale; 'net work subsidiary' forbidden; Traffic Commissioners retained with disciplinary powers. Removed exemption from anti-competitive laws.  
Took effect 26.10.86.

Subsequently all PTE undertakings have been sold, and all but 17 municipal businesses. For a short period several new financial interests appeared, but the situation later settled into a pattern of 'area agreement' companies, not unlike the former Provincial and Scottish Combines, with a limited number of holding companies dominating the market. Some degree of contestability remains, and small firms tend to be tolerated at the fringes of the market. The expected growth of commercial expertise and particularly marketing, has been slow to materialise.

**1984-95 Privatisation (but not deregulation of London Bus Services.**

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**John Hibbs 2000**

**Note:**

John Hibbs would welcome any additions to the above listing that anyone wishes to submit.

It seems that perhaps now is the time to chronicle the formation and evolution of the present "Big Three" bus groups:

FirstBus

Stagecoach

Arriva

Of particular interest is how in recent times the bus companies have invested into the railways (as train operators). Also in need of listing is the breaking up of the former National Bus Company, both before and after Deregulation Day, and a definitive list of the demise of the municipal operations, of which less than one fifth remain.

## Jennings (coachbuilder) Herefordshire

At the September meeting, a letter was discussed which related to the activities of the Jennings brothers from Cheshire.

John Dunabin has done some research on the matter and writes-

"Walter Jennings was a younger brother of John Henry Jennings or Marthall, Cheshire (the relationship confirmed from the 1881 Census by Tony Newman) J.H.Jennings was the founder of the well-known Sanbach based business which produced many livestock transporters. Their father was himself a wheelwright.

"Walter moved to Herefordshire in 1913 and established his own bodybuilding business at Holmer, starting with horsedrawn floats etc. Soon after the end of the First World War he turned to motor bus and lorry construction for local and South Wales concerns. The 'Davis' referred to in the letter was probably D.J.Davies of Merthyr Tydfil, whose "Merthyr Motor Service", later "Wheatsheaf Motors", was certainly one of Mr. Jennings' customers.

"From the recollections of Walter Jennings' son many years later, it seems clear that his more successful uncle came to the rescue on the occasion of the financial difficulties mentioned in the letter. However, the appearance of Walter at Hereford Bankruptcy Court on 26th October 1926 signalled the end of the business."

### Note

The Jennings bodybuilding firm in Cheshire is still functioning.

D.J.Davies also built bus bodies during the 1950s.

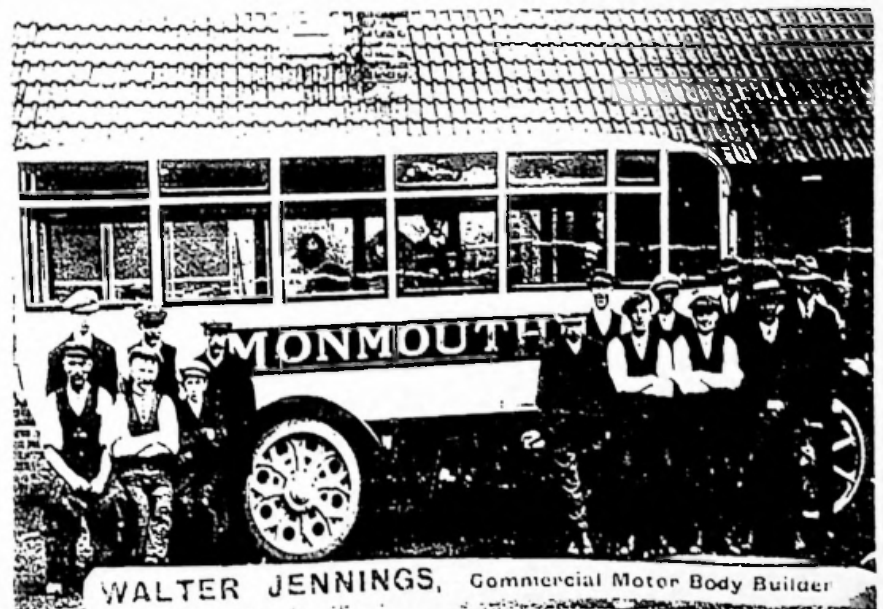
*An advertising photograph of Hereford Transport Daimler No.5, registered CJ 3550, with a Jennings 22 seat body.*

*(J.E.Dunabin collection)*



*Another Jennings bodied Daimler and some of the workforce. Mr.Jennings himself is possibly the man in the straw boater. Despite the name on the side, this bus too was to be supplied to Hereford Transport Ltd.*

*(J.E.Dunabin collection)*



# Thomas Telford and the Holyhead Road by Roger Cragg

At the beginning of the 19th century Parliament was increasingly concerned about the state of communications with Ireland and in particular with the condition of the road from London to Holyhead. A Committee on the Holyhead Roads and Harbour was set up and first reported on 21st March 1810 when it complained that although a grant of £10,000 had been made towards improving the harbour at Holyhead, nothing appeared to have been done. In its second report, dated 9th June 1810 the Committee noted that the two roads through Wales, from Shrewsbury and Chester to Bangor, were in a very bad state. John Rennie had been consulted and had suggested two sites for iron bridges over the Menai Straits, at Ynys y Moch and at Swelly Roacks, and also a proposal for an iron arch bridge at Conway. By May 1811 the Committee was reporting that the road was now worse than before and would become impassable. Thomas Telford had been asked to report on the Shrewsbury to Holyhead road and a possible bridge over the Menai Straits. Telford's proposed route would be from Shrewsbury via Chirk, Llangollen, Corwen, Bettws-y-Coed, Capel Curig and Llyn Ogwen to Bangor. He also submitted a design for iron arch bridges at Ynys y Moch and at Conway.

Nothing seems to have been done for four years but in June 1815 a Select Committee was reporting that the road in North Wales was now in the "worst possible condition". For the route from London to Holyhead they recommended Telford's route via Coventry, Birmingham, and Shrewsbury as being the "shortest and best". The English section of the route, from London to Shrewsbury was then under the control of 15 different turnpike trusts and the Select Committee recommended that public funds should be used to carry out the necessary repairs and improvements to the road as the likely income from tolls would be inadequate for this purpose. They also suggested that Commissioners should be appointed to oversee the project.

The Select Committee, in its second report in June 1815 recorded that the Irish Mail left the General Post Office in London at 8.00 pm and travelled via Oxford, Birmingham, Shrewsbury and arrived in

41 hours to travel 276½ miles, an average speed of 6¼ miles per hour. They hoped that by suitably improving the road this time might be reduced to 37 hours.

In 1815 an Act of Parliament established the Commission for the Holyhead Road and the work on improving the Holyhead Road was started. Thomas Telford was appointed as Engineer to the Commission and reported regularly on the progress being made under his direction. In Wales, the Commissioners doubted that the six Turnpike Trusts which were responsible for the road west of Shrewsbury could adequately maintain the new road once it was completed, and consequently in 1819 an Act was passed to establish a Parliamentary Turnpike Commission which took over the administration of that section of the Holyhead Road from the old Trusts. For the English section, between London and Shrewsbury, the task of repairing and improving the road was left in the hands of the existing Turnpike Trusts which carried out improvement work as directed by Telford and his assistants. The route chosen on Telford's recommendation started in Islington and proceeded via Barnet, St. Albans, Dunstable, Fenny Stratford, Towcester, Weedon, Dunchurch and Coventry to Birmingham. From Birmingham the route was via Wolverhampton, Shifnal, Wellington and Shrewsbury where commenced the Welsh section of the route previously described. It will be noted that although most of this route follows what is nowadays regarded as the 'Holyhead Road' (the A5) the route through the Midlands between Weedon and Wellington did not follow the present route.

The improvement works were numerous but in general can be summarised under four main headings. Firstly, the road was to be widened where the existing width was inadequate. Telford recommended an overall width of about 35 to 40 feet with a 30 foot wide carriageway and one or two footpaths about five feet wide. Secondly, the alignment of the road was to be improved where necessary: for example to the west of Coventry a new road was built for about 1½ miles to avoid climbing and then descending a hill. Thirdly, steep gradients were to be eased, usually by cutting through the top of hills and using the excavated material to form embankments at the bottom. At Knightlow Hill, to the east of Coventry Telford proposed to lower the summit of the hill and provide embankments to reduce the existing gradients of 1 in 15 and 1 in 16 to a more manageable 1 in 27. Finally, the road pavement was to be rebuilt to Telford's specification using layers of broken stone. A typical specification is quoted in Telford's 'Life' which may

# ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

## HISTORY CONFERENCE COLLOQUIUM

3rd November 2001

Report of Proceedings

The 2001 Colloquium was held in the Garden Room of the Midland Hotel, Derby, on Saturday 3rd November 2001. Delegates were welcomed by the Chairman, Professor John Hibbs, who also welcomed our new President, Garry Turvey, who was attending his first R&RTHC event since he agreed to accept the Presidency.

John reminded us that despite the fact that one source told him that the word "colloquium" was "a term no longer in use", his dictionary said otherwise, and he hoped that delegates would illustrate the true meaning of the word by making their voices heard after each of the speakers' presentations.

The title of Colloquium 2001 was:

### **"The Preservation and Disposal of Personal Collections"**

**Ian Yearsley was the first speaker, and his theme was making a will, briefing executors and beneficiaries, and ensuring that items you value will be accessible to future historians.**

Ian began by warning against doing nothing. It was not an option. If then, making a will is essential, how should this be done? (Not making a will can result in all the estate being turned into money, and monies going to obscure relatives.)

Firstly, you should identify the items which you wish to see preserved. What are the things your family or friends might value? What are the things that a transport archive might value? Which items might nobody in particular value? How should these things be identified?

Secondly, having identified items as worthy of preservation, you should consider who would not only welcome them, but be able to look after them. It is necessary to ask questions, to do some research in advance, to find out which archive, library, society or institution would take your bequest and which has the facilities for taking care of it and allowing access by others to it. Find out, too, about the policy on the items which may be duplicated.....may they be sold for the benefit of the recipient?

Thirdly, one should find out whether the beneficiary is a registered charity.....the latter status gives some assurance of continuity and can be of benefit to the deceased's estate in that tax is not due on the value of items left to charity (It is necessary, however, to ascertain the charity's proper title, address and regis-

tered number, to quote in the will.)

Next, choose your executors wisely. It is best to choose people who live near you, who are younger than yourself. Tell them your wishes and get their agreement, and choose from people who understand the material they are asked to handle. For example, a recent estate for disposal involved papers and books to do with the family, with the travel trade, and with transport. And so three executors were appointed, one from the family, one with knowledge of the travel trade, and one with knowledge of transport matters.

It is best to show your chosen executors what you have and where it is stored. Items can be marked (with a colour coded spot). Give your executors a photocopy of your will, and an additional letter to clarify any points that may be doubtful. (For example, try to cover any "grey" areas where items may be seen to be of interest to more than one of the beneficiaries.)

Photographs and negatives (or other items) may involve copyright. You should specify that copyright is also part of the bequest.

When the will is drafted, even if it has been submitted to a solicitor to be put into legal language, remember that the solicitor is unlikely to understand everything about the collection. It may be best to ask if any of the societies, libraries etc. have a standard bequest form which may be incorporated in the will.

Indexing and cataloguing are essential with an extensive collection. Are such compatible with the systems likely to be used by others? In some cases, collections have been left with instructions that they be not broken up. Except in very special cases, this is an embarrassment to the recipient, and can hinder access to the material in the future.

Finally, some people not only leave archives and artifacts, but also leave money to ensure their continued care. However much material is welcome to the recipient, there will be a cost in keeping it. This should be kept in mind.

### **Subsequent discussion**

The ensuing discussion re-emphasised the following points. John Hibbs recalled that his own will involved separate executors with expertise in theology, economics and transport. Andrew Johnson emphasised the pitfalls of borderlines, and problems of valuation of such as copyright on photographs and intellectual copyright on published materials. John Howie spoke of the problems of cataloguing, and of

the incompatibility of "home-made" systems. Norman Bartlett reminded us that the present law is that **copyright expires seventy years after death**. Alan Cross took up this topic and reminded us that you cannot bequeath copyright of things to which you yourself do not own the copyright....for example any photographs in your possession which you own but did not take. Colin Billington emphasised the duty of the recipient to **keep to the law on copyright**.....the recipient cannot use material to which he has not been assigned the copyright.

John Dunabin raised the issue of **estate duty and valuation of copyright** etc. An executor is able to "take a view" on what is unclear, but it is always better for precise instructions to be left in these matters.

Roger de Boer enquired if it was absolutely necessary to quote registered numbers of **charities** in a will. It was suggested in reply, that such is best, and if a will had already been drawn up, a codicil could append the necessary details.

Grahame Boyes pointed out that the Public Record Office had recently published a guide to the **law on copyright**, and this included guidance on the questions raised by **electronic communications**. A booklet also exists that deals with photographic copyright: (see details at end.) **Unindexed photographic collections** are not welcomed or refused in some cases:

Ted Gadsby spoke on issues connected with the Omnibus Society Library. **Duplicate material** is passed to "Osmart", run by Derek Broadhurst, who will go out to collect materials and who sells them generally within the OS. Ted was first to mention that there are enthusiasts who are "loners" that have no membership of any formal or informal group. What happens to their collections. He mentioned how a chance remark in a newspaper obituary column led to the discovery of some important timetables.

John Edser asked if **donations to charities** (non taxable) can be sold off by the charities.

One "problem" to which there is no answer is that gifts may be accepted by institutions or others and kept, but then at a future date, the recipient may wish to raise money and see fit to sell the gifted items.

The second speaker was Richard Storey, formerly of the Warwick University Modern Records Centre, who in particular spoke of the collection of papers.

Richard began by pointing out that it was perhaps better to dispose of one's collection oneself, before death. If that course was not attractive, then a will should be seen as a simple instruction sheet.

One should look at one's papers critically. Is their value merely personal to the creator? Do they

have a value in cash? Of what value would they be to a future custodian? Do they have any intellectual property value? Are the materials of value to the collector, and would they be of value and relevance to the potential custodian (archivist or librarian)?

What form are they? Notebooks need not be kept if their contents have been transferred to other works or documents. Notes made from other published works are similar. Photographic collections may well have many examples of others' work, and may contain many of one's own pictures which have been widely disseminated. Correspondence with fellow enthusiasts may contain items worth preserving. Subject files may well be good for preservation, unless they represent the material gathered for a work that has been published. Drafts of unpublished works are important and should be kept.

Published books, journals etc. are best disposed of to commercial booksellers, unless they are clearly rare because of their age or content. Leaflets and other ephemera, so-called *grey literature*, and booklets of limited distribution are best preserved. (Such will probably not be lodged in copyright libraries) Press cuttings on a particular theme, although published material, are best kept because to re-create the file would take much searching and time. A well-ordered collection is a valuable asset.

Many papers lose much of their value if they are not properly ordered. If this is so, NOW is the time to put material in order. Young enthusiasts should be encouraged to think of the future and establish some order in their collections from the start.

Do not forget about the contents of your PC. It is best to keep hard copy of most of this, not only for posterity but as an insurance against malfunction of the machine. At least keep a list of what you have on electronic files.

One should look at a collection with a critical eye. What is unique in it? Are notes of observations, unpublished writings, *grey literature* gathered, rare or unique, or common or garden? If material appears to be rare or unique, to whom should it go? Is it material which you have finished with? Can it be passed on now? Libraries hate bequests of books, most of which they are likely to have already. If you are to make a gift of papers, has the intended repository the means to store the material? Why not help by purchasing archive boxes to house your valuable papers now and for the future?

You are the best person to know what is in the collection and what it all means. Remember to find out who would value what, label and annotate, pass on particular items to those who may currently be able to make best use of them. Remember that archives are always under pressure, with insufficient



resources of finance, time, staffing and space.

#### **Subsequent discussion**

David Harman and others spoke of the pitfalls of material held on computer. **Hard copy** was by far the best, as disks, programs and machines all become obsolete (many have done in the last 30 years). It did not seem a wise idea to keep old machines just to read certain files.

Alan Cross counselled acting in one's own lifetime, and not waiting for others to do it !

Unfortunately, our third speaker was unable to attend at the last minute. John Hibbs announced that Ian Yearsley, with his TMS background, had agreed to step in, to talk about the problems of preserving artifacts, including complete vehicles.

Ian began by telling us that he had insight into collection management from his work on various committees with the Tramway Museum Society. He pointed out that societies today who relied upon outside funding were under great pressure for "curatorial excellence" and scrutiny as to why they were doing what they were doing, and in donating items to them, your items would come under scrutiny and perhaps, unless you had checked beforehand, might be discarded. Another problem is that conserving records does not contribute towards income, so there is a conflict between conservation and operation of a museum. Ian also stressed the need for good labelling and pre-sorting of donated material. (Some artifacts have been difficult to identify).

In the case of vehicles, which are best seen in working order and in use, there is a dilemma facing the owner.....how far should one go in replacing defective parts and replacing items such as wiring which are not in line with today's safety standards ? For example, trams rebuilt at Crich receive new safety glass and wiring, and fire extinguishers. Defective parts removed were kept in some cases as samples of the original.

#### **Subsequent discussion**

Roger de Boer spoke on the theme of fitting replacement parts in regard to preserved buses. Ray Stanmore spoke of the problems in renewing wiring in preserved buildings. Brian Elliott spoke regarding steam railway locos, where two sets of rules for main line running and for running on private lines apply. Other difficulties are caused by the need to provide access for the disabled (a point raised by John Edsor)

Mrs. Pat Sutcliffe referred in detail to her husband's unique collection of restored vehicles. Such a collection could not have been put together without a single-minded input of time and money, and there seemed to be no obvious or satisfactory solution as to

what could be done with the vehicles in the long term. A trust did not seem to be the answer, as there was no obvious choice of trustees

The subject of **photography** was raised again, and the solution to the problem of old film stock and non-standard sizes being digitised. Charles Roberts and Ian Yearsley described how negatives of still and moving images may be digitised and the original material then kept in deep freeze. Alan Cross pointed out that digital prints are not yet of as high a quality as good photographic prints from negatives. Again the question of selection was raised...Charles Roberts making the point that digital manipulating is time consuming, and it is not worth while doing this for all the pictures in a collection.

Returning to the preservation of large objects, we were reminded that there are limits as to what can be stored. (.When is a Boeing 747 to be preserved ?) Alan Cross drew attention to the difference between an object stored in a well-funded museum, and one kept privately in an old barn. Many objects (vehicles) were kept purely for private sentiment and according to the owner's means.

**At this point that the meeting was adjourned for lunch. The first speaker in the afternoon was Brian Longworth of the Glasgow Transport Study Group, Glasgow, who spoke on the subject of setting up a self-help Group concerned with history and preservation.**

Brian told us that he had started off as a boy and young man with an interest in Glasgow's transport. Eventually he had the opportunity of working for Glasgow Corporation Transport as an accountant, and this led him to a "treasure trove" of documents in the basement of the offices. Over many years he extracted material from this source, and seized the opportunity, just before Deregulation in 1986, of rescuing many documents from destruction.

Storage of the material was a problem, there is so much he has yet to complete the task of evaluating it. Some material has been taken by the Glasgow Archives Department, other material went to TMS, and when the Sumerlee Museum with a working tramway was established this also became a suitable home for materials and artifacts. A visit to the library one day revealed that someone else had an interest in Glasgow tramways, and eventually a number of like-minded individuals came together informally as the GTSG. One stated aim is to document Glasgow Cpn. Transport in the same comprehensive way as Leeds and Liverpool have been done. The task is too large for any one person to do, and many of the members specialise in a particular field. (e.g. destination blinds, badges, fares etc.) It may not culminate in the publi-



cation of a series of detailed volumes, for which there is a limited market, but in several general books and a CD on which the finer detail will be stored. It is important to copy to this disk a list of all members material to avoid irretrievable loss on death. Several copies of the CD are kept for security. Brian in particular mentioned the fact that there are enthusiasts who pursue their transport studies in isolation, and their collections are often the ones to be lost. It is important to find these people and enlist their help.

#### Subsequent discussion

Brian's last point was illustrated by reference to a collection now in safe keeping of over 1000 photographs of the trams and buses of Exeter Corporation taken by one person. Paul Jefford (LVVS) said that he found vehicle restorers and record keepers are two distinct breeds. He felt that the use of data bases was one way of avoiding the break-up of particular collections.

Ron Phillips stated he felt publication and dissemination were often the best way of preserving material. He felt some enthusiasts were too possessive and unwilling to share their knowledge. John Hibbs spoke of a recent project of his own - he had conducted taped interviews with twenty-five former NBC managers in which they spoke frankly. These recordings were now deposited with the Kithead Archive under the 30 year rule.

Alan Cross referred to research he was conducting into gas bus trailers - he felt it was the last chance to document this as the generation that had used and knew the wartime gas buses was dying out.

Roger Atkinson introduced the subject of the "hidden historians" who needed to be identified. Brian Longworth referred to one of the GTSG members who had never been a member of any other society in his life, and referred again to the CD which contained a cross-referenced list of all members' "bits & pieces"

Ian Yearsley emphasised the importance of the GTSG's work, as Glasgow Tramways had been a leading organisation of its kind, and its methods had been widely copied. The issue of the destruction of official records was raised by John Hibbs (who urged vigilance when transport enterprises are seen to be on the brink of closing down) and Mervyn Ashton who recounted how Liverpool and Merseyside PTE records had been rescued, but unfortunately and not for want of trying, those of Merseybus had not. He thought that there was good co-ordination of efforts between the various societies in the North West, but felt that there was a need for better organisation in other parts of the country.

The final speaker was Andrew Johnson of the PSV Circle, who outlined the idea of "Trustee Rescuers" to save the destruction of collections.

Andrew advised individuals to think about their collections and act appropriately, neither too soon nor too late. All transport societies should get together, and perhaps the "major" ones (he thought there were at least ten) could fund a scheme with, say, £100 each. This would allow collections to be retrieved, sorted and disposed of appropriately, with some benefit to the family of the deceased. A problem was timing, when should a family be approached, but the real answer to this lay with the deceased making arrangements before death. He quoted some recent retrievals of documents he had made in South Africa, and of another in this country which he felt had been "too late".

#### Subsequent Discussion

The opening speakers raised the problem of finding bodies prepared to receive and store documents, which is not seen to be an income generating activity. Roger de Boer opined that many museums were administered by people who had little enthusiasm for nor knowledge of what they were being asked to keep.

John Hibbs outlined how he saw the R&RTHC acting as "an umbrella organisation" to facilitate co-ordination between its member societies. John Edsall said he would like to see a published list of "which society held what" in its archives. Grahame Boyes spoke of places where items might be sent (Record Offices, major local libraries etc.) and suggested that Conference could play a role in placing refused items. Richard Storey referred once again to the pressure on space in Museums which often will only keep archives relevant to the items which they hold

#### Conclusion

John Hibbs (Chairman of the R&RTHC) made the plea that the status of transport history be raised.

Roger Atkinson (Treasurer of the R&RTHC) thanked the speakers and delegates for their attendance and contributions, and reiterated that the R&RTHC wants to take forward many of the points raised. He welcomed new members and pointed out that the outcome of the 2001 Colloquium will be discussed at the AGM and Business Meeting on 9th February 2002 at the Museum of British Road Transport Coventry.

Gordon Knowles (Secretary of the R&RTHC) concluded by saying that if we are going to take on extra functions, then we need people to help to do it, people willing to devote time additionally to the five who at present constitute the Officers of the Conference.

*These notes, with some additional material, will appear in the February 2002 edition of the R&RTHC Newsletter. There is an attached annexe of useful addresses etc. supplied herewith.*

A level base with a bottom course of broken stone 7 inches deep in the centre and 5 inches deep at the edge. An upper course of stone passing a 2½ inch ring with a weight of not less than 6 ounces, to a depth of 6 inches. A gravel surfacing course 1½ inches deep.

Telford's frequent reports to the Commissioners and to the various Committees of Parliament make interesting reading. He details for each Turnpike Trust the work already carried out, the present condition of the road and the work required to be done to bring the road into a condition which would meet with his approval. As each Trust had its own surveyor who oversaw the day to day progress it was inevitable that some sections of the road would make better progress than others and Telford's reports make frequent reference to the lack of progress of some of the Trusts whilst others were producing a satisfactory standard of work.

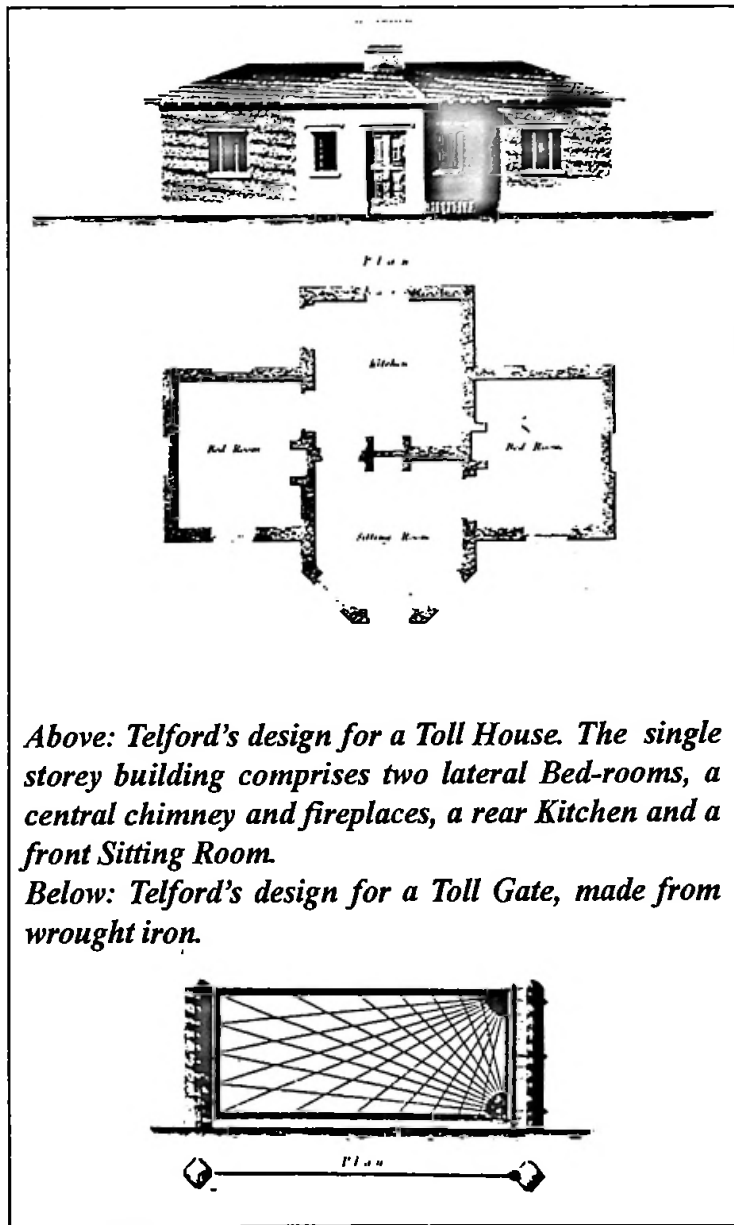
In 1817 Telford was asked to report on the possibility of carrying the Holyhead Road across the Menai Straits by means of a suspension bridge and in June 1818 the foundation stone was laid in the Anglesey pier. The bridge, with its wrought iron suspension chains and a main span of 579 feet, was completed in 1826, the Resident Engineer being William Provis and the ironwork being cast by William Hazeldene at Upton Forge, near Shrewsbury. In addition to the great bridge over the Menai, Telford also designed the elegant iron bridge at Bettws-y-Coed, opened in 1815 and embellished by the legend cast in its outer ribs that "This arch was constructed in the same year the battle of Waterloo was fought."

By 1826, when the Menai Bridge was opened, the Welsh section of the road was largely completed, a new road across Anglesey having been built by 1822. Work on the English section continued for several more years and was not completed when Thomas Telford died in September 1834.

The Holyhead Road was furnished with a series of fifteen Toll Houses built to Telford's design, bungalows with overhanging eaves on the mainland and two storey buildings on Anglesey. Several of these remain, one has been preserved at the Blist's Hill Museum at Ironbridge and one remains *in situ*

on the old A5 road just to the west of Wellington. Telford also designed the elegant milestones which were placed along the whole route.

By the time the road was approaching completion, the London and Birmingham and the Grand Junction Railways had opened (in 1837 and 1838)



*Above: Telford's design for a Toll House. The single storey building comprises two lateral Bed-rooms, a central chimney and fireplaces, a rear Kitchen and a front Sitting Room.*

*Below: Telford's design for a Toll Gate, made from wrought iron.*

and by 1850 with the opening of the Chester and Holyhead Railway, the road had lost most of its long distance traffic and in particular the mail traffic which now used the railway. In 1851 the Commissioners reported that they did not consider that the road was of sufficient importance to justify public expenditure on its maintenance.

The fact that it has only been in recent times that this road has been superseded by new routes is a great testimony to the genius of Thomas Telford and those who worked with him on this great enterprise.

# The beginnings of NIGHT COACH SERVICES in Britain by John Dunabin

Text of presentation given by John Dunabin to the  
September Meeting, in which he answered the  
questions What, When, Where, Who, and possibly  
Why:

There is a magic about being first in any field. One leads, then others follow, or, if wise, sometimes they don't, much argument ensues, with the wrong persons often getting the credit; it all depends on definition.

It seems generally accepted that the first long distance motor coach service in this country was that of Greyhound Motors from Bristol to London, starting in February 1925. But, it wasn't a coach, only a solid-tyred bus, it didn't go very far, outside the towns it offered short distance fares and the buses carried conductors. Furthermore, regular summer charabanc services were already well established, those of Chapmans of Eastbourne and Elliott Brothers ("Royal Blue") of Bournemouth, both running from their home towns to London being amongst the first but soon followed by a number of others.

Starting with a trickle in 1926-1927 there was a great upsurge over much of England, and night services soon followed. Here I am ignoring any very late night or very early morning theatre runs from London, where the inward journeys were of course daytime ones. The first (risking contradiction) was the famous "Albatross" all sleeper service. This began on 19th August 1928, initially with a single coach, a 12 berth ADC registered just a week earlier - not much time for route proving and no allowance for breakdowns!

The original route was London - Warrington - Liverpool; Warrington being the only official intermediate stop. Intruding a personal note, by lucky chance I did see this coach there, standing outside the travel agency (Dawsons of Sankey Street) which still functions from the same address over 70 years later. By the end of the year, the fleet had increased to three vehicles, and the service, now daily, had been diverted via Manchester in lieu of the separate Manchester service originally proposed. Next came a London - Leeds - Bradford service, running three times a week. Officially this was operated by Road Sleepers (Leeds)

Limited, but the coach was one of the small Albatross fleet, which meant that the two services ran with no spares.

On 19th December 1929 these two were joined by a third, running between Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Darlington and London, provided by the ubiquitous Arthur Speak. Starting with United Automobile Services soon after the end of the First World War, Arthur Speak quickly rose to become the Traffic Manager. He then set up in direct opposition to his former employers. Regarding the sleeper service, his former chief, the great E. B. Hutchinson, was reported as having said that constant gear changing would keep the passengers awake. An article in the technical press just three days after the service began (*Modern Transport*, 22nd December 1928) described the many amenities and safeguards built into the coach (one only at this time) with others resulting from personal attention by the staff. The possibility of later having separate vehicles for men and women was mentioned, with an embargo until then on undressing fully. Windows were nevertheless frosted. Booking conditions included one barring admission to the coach, with forfeiture of the fare paid, to anyone in a state of intoxication. From personal observation, the Albatross coach had clear windows, and by inference, changing into nightwear was permitted.

Another imitator appeared quite soon, or at least threatened to do so. Land Liners of Edgeware with a 21-berth full-height double decker, also on the London - Manchester run. One report was that this proved not to be a paying proposition, but another, more probable, stated that the two vehicles, Strachan & Brown bodied Guys, exceeded maximum weight limits.

Actually, cost did kill sleeper coaches. It has been said that this was due to the high cost of laundering bed-linen, but a more likely cause was the low passenger capacity of the vehicles employed (and their high initial cost), which could not be fully compensated by higher fares. Full load receipts for a return journey between London and Liverpool were approximately:

Day (30 seat coach).....	£37
Day (cheaper 24 seater).....	£29
Night Sleeper.....	£25

Lasting little longer than a year, if that, the idea of sleeper coaches must be regarded as a failure - the three Albatross vehicles it has been said ended up as horse-boxes - but these pioneers had demonstrated the feasibility of timetabled long-distance night running. By July 1929 there were five operators running between Tyneside and London, two more from Sunderland, three from Manchester, and one from

Leeds. By September there were eighteen night services of seventeen operators being advertised, with Liverpool and Cardiff now linked to London by night. The longest service was that run by "Cestrian" of Chester-le-Street, between London, Tyneside, Edinburgh and Glasgow. This was scheduled to leave each terminus at noon, arriving at its final destination in time for breakfast.

This is what has long fascinated the writer; who travelled so far for so long? Then there were the advertised connections. London to Aberystwyth (over night to Cardiff, then most of the following day) took a mere 16½ hours, but London to Aberdeen, with a choice of two operators as far as Newcastle, was scheduled to last not less than 26 hours. How many passengers made such epic journeys? Alas, we do not know.

The foregoing has dealt briefly with *what*, *when*, and *where*; *why* is more complex. What caused the great upsurge in long distance coach services from 1926 to 1930? Was it the availability of faster and more comfortable vehicles? Did the General Strike of 1926 have some delayed effect? Was it the widespread depression which hit South Lancashire, County Durham and South Wales early and made the more prosperous South East such a magnet?

Clearly the depression produced sellers as well as buyers. The successful Orange Brothers of Bedlington were ex-miners, and so probably was Mr. Towers of "Cestrian". The buyers included many unemployed men, coming to London seeking work on open-date returns at around half the railway fares. But why nights? My own observations only date from 1936, when the depression was easing a little, and all then on the London - Cheltenham - South Wales routes. The passengers as I recall were mostly male, with no children, no old people, no couples, and no holiday-makers. The men were seeking work (or returning home disappointed). And there were a few girls going into service or nursing. All were friendly. But again, why nights? Accommodation in London was not dear, if not always so desirable, but a night on the coach cost nothing more than the fare, and left the day free for seeking work.

Now to the other *who*, meaning the providers. They were of course a mixed bunch, free and independent spirits one might say, and some without any professional transport experience; in general, the major companies only appeared later, swallowing up (or rescuing, depending on one's point of view) the pioneers. Out of many, two can perhaps be singled out for special mention.

Firstly there is Gerald Nowell (details of his career are taken from Blacker, Dunn, and Westgate's

*London's Buses Volume 1*) With a fellow ex Public Schoolboy George Haywood, after jointly running a business selling hand-made cigarettes, preceded by service in the RASC as a lorry driver, spells in the RNVR, the Foreign Office and with Lever Brothers in Africa, he founded the "Orange" service, described as one of the more dynamic London Independents. This business was sold to the LGOC in 1927, but in little over a year, Nowell started the "Great Western Express", which eventually, after taking a large share in the London to South Wales coach traffic, was sold to Red & White Services Ltd. in December 1932.

Unsurprisingly in view of his previous record, Mr. Nowell became one of the earliest operators of a non-sleeper night service, with a London - Newport run (later extended to Cardiff and beyond.), which began on 2nd March 1929. It was launched with champagne! by Renee and Billie Houston, then stars of the London variety stage.

Most striking of them all though, so far as information goes, was the leader of the pack, Mr. Harold Chirgwin, quite a long time before starting his "Albatross" service, he was a Music Hall star. He appeared at the first Royal Variety Command Performance of 1912 as "The White-Eyed Kaffir."!

Finally, a few words about another important group of *dramatis personae*, namely the drivers. Relaxed, extrovert, friendly, some of them not averse to sleeping away from home now and then, they made coach travel by night at least as pleasant as by day. Two I recall from long ago, who worked as a team on the London to Treherbert service, seemed to embody all the virtues. Two? They changed from dozing to driving both ways at Cheltenham, with the statutory half-hour break there. With plenty of things there to enjoy, they did not go to bed in London, making up for this by sleeping for twelve hours or so in Treherbert. Anybody who knew this somewhat remote mining village at that time will perhaps understand their habit.

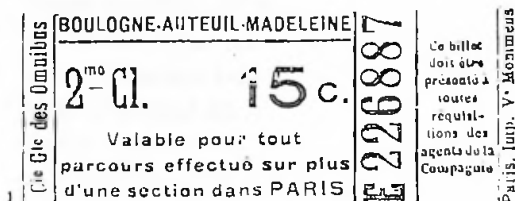
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TJ

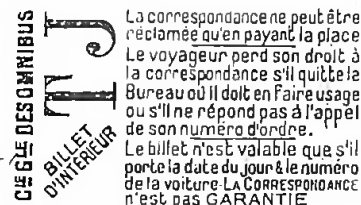
A-Z

In Newsletter 26 there was a description of the Paris correspondance system used on horse buses and trams in the late nineteenth century. Below we show some tickets from the period from Roger Atkinson's collection.

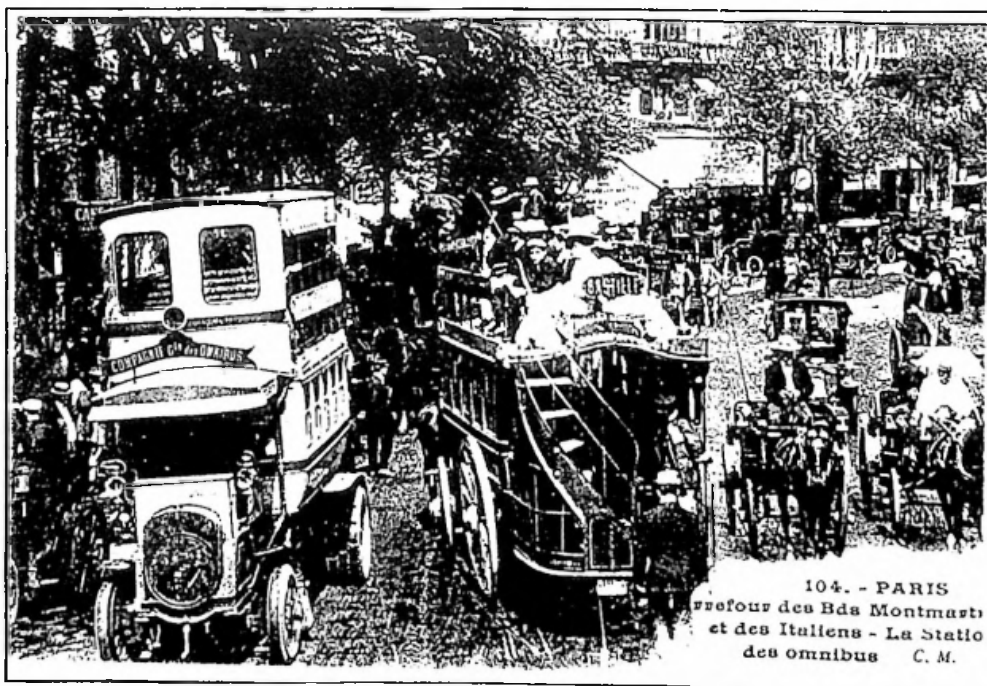
First, a 3rd Class (outside) CGO ticket, printed on orange paper. The 15 centime fare is available for a journey inside central Paris.



Secondly, the correspondance ticket as given out at the office to a passenger presenting a travel ticket (30 centimes) relating to the just completed journey to the transfer point. This is an orange cardboard ticket (Edmondson style) valid for a ride on route TJ on the central section.



*Described on the caption as - "the junction of the Boulevards Montmartre and des Invalides - the bus station." this view of vehicular congestion shows a new fangled C.G.O. 'Eugene Brillié' motor bus and 5 horse drawn buses amongst the cabs, carts and taxis !*



A biography is to be published of the woman, Mrs. Phyllis Pearsall, who created the well-known A - Z guides of British cities.

She first thought of the idea in 1935, when she arrived late and wet for a dinner party having lost her way in London. Then a widow of 30, she set about producing an easy to use guide (The London A-Z) and her work was published in the following year, after she had gone on foot over all the ground, rising at 5am and working through until midnight each day. She was based in a bed-sit in the Holloway Road.

Established map makers were not happy with what they considered a cheap form of cartography, but the guide flourished. The company which produces the A-Z series is the Geographers Map Co Ltd., which Mrs. Pearsall made a trust in 1966 to prevent takeovers or mergers endangering the jobs of the employees. Over 100 people work for the company which now produces 266 titles in the series.

Mrs. Pearsall was made a CBE before her death in 1996, and now a lady journalist is to write her life story after discovering that London taxi drivers were quite unaware of the origin of the little books which form the basis of their training (*the knowledge*).

The book in preparation is to be entitled "Mrs. P's Journey; the Remarkable Story of the Woman who Created the A-Z Map" and published by Simon and Schuster.

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