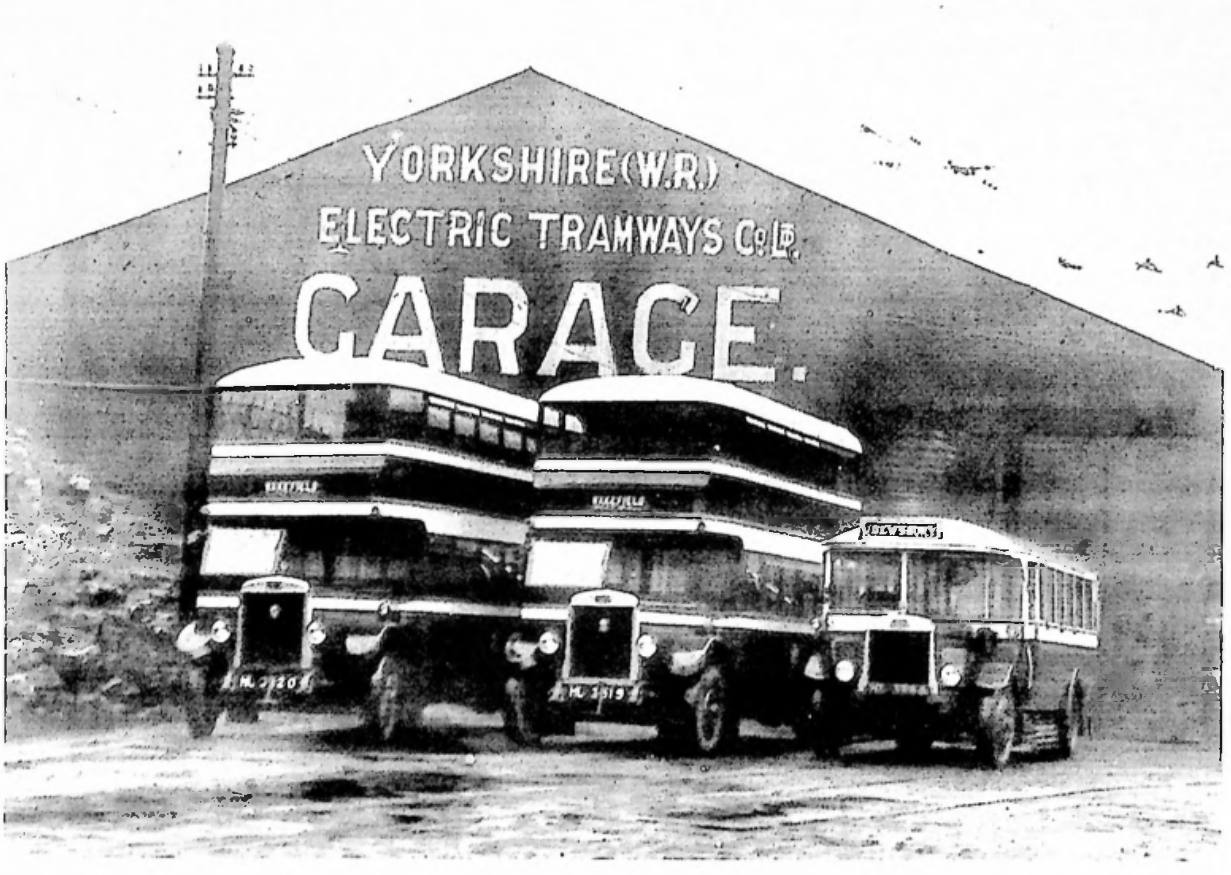
ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY ASSOCIATON NEWSLETTER

September 2002 Issue Number 30



In This Issue

CONFERENCE MATTERS

Change of title

The change of the title of the Society, effective since the summer, will not be reflected in the title used traditionally on Page Two of every Newsletter. The Hon.Editor considered "Association Affairs", but opted for the traditional heading as Page Two is generally concerned with matters which have been discussed at our meetings.

Dinner and Symposium, 2002

Following our successful Symposium held at the Midland Hotel, Derby, last autumn, it was felt that a meeting celebrating 10 years of the R&RTHA should be organised this year, with a celebration dinner held on the preceding evening. Leaflets giving details of the proposed event were circulated with the summer edition of Newsletter. The dinner will be held on Friday 25th October, with the Symposium, entitled "**Learning from History**" on the Saturday. A buffet lunch will be provided. Full details are given in the panel opposite.

Enrolment and Booking

If you require an enrolment form, or wish to make a booking, please contact the Hon. Treasurer, Roger Atkinson, at the address shown on the front cover. Please note that bookings for the Dinner and accommodation should be made by **Thursday 10th October.** The all inclusive cost for the Dinner, room and breakfast, and the Conference including buffet lunch is £125. The conference and buffet only costs £35 (bookings please by 20th October.)

Learning from History (from the Chairman)

It is an occasion for us to take pride in, that we have built up such a significant Association over the past ten years, and at Derby on 25th-26th October we want to celebrate this, and to do something more. **Learning from History** is the title of our Symposium, and for good reason. We want to emphasise the importance of the work we all do - to study the past in order to understand the present and to help to prepare for the future (to paraphrase Lord Keynes.)

I believe that the time has come for the study of transport history - in all modes - to be recognised as a serious contribution to knowledge. So I hope that as many members as possible can come to Derby (not many conferences are so reasonably priced) and let us celebrate together and prepare to go forward.

JAH

Next Newsletter

The next edition of Newsletter will appear just after the date of the Anniversary Dinner

R & RTHA

10th Anniversary Dinner and

SYMPOSIUM 2002

in association with
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ENGLAND
Business Schoola

at
Midland Hotel, Derby
on Friday 25th October (dinner)
& Saturday 26th October (conference)
10.00 - 16.00

"Learning from History, current transport issues that have historic roots"

Speakers

Dr John Hibbs

David Holding

Revd Dr. R. J. Buckley

Dorian Gerhold

Jim Hulme

Kevin Hey

The speakers will address such topics as road haulage, paying for infrastructure, tolls, territorial 'agreements', manning levels and 'piracy.'

Enrolment forms now available

OBITUARY

Tony Pomeroy FCIT, FILT

Tony Pomeroy, who died on August 21st aged 71, joined the Chartered Institute of Transport as a Student member in 1954 and was the Director of Education and Training of the CIT from 1989 until his retirement in 1995.

Tony was a History graduate of Nottingham University and joined Grey Green coaches in 1954. He took the Institute's exams whilst working for the now defunct London parcels carrier N. Francis & Co. Ltd (1957-59) and he became a corporate member of the Institute in January 1960. He then moved to take charge of the London area distribution of Advanced Lines Services before joining Louis Reece, the fruit importer, in 1963, as Director of Distribution. When Reece was bought out in 1985, Tony was made redundant, and started a second career in transport education.

National Serrvice in the Army Education Corps kindled Tony's interest in education matters and having lectured part-time at North Western Polytechnic in the early sixties, he took this up again and lectured at the London School of Foreign Trade, the London College of Advanced Transport Studies and at City of London Polytechnic. He was also a director of the Transport Tutorial Association, for many years before becoming the Secretary at the beginning of 1987. The TTA was established in 1946 as the Transport Tutorial Committee to provide correspondence courses for students of the Institute's qualifications who were unable to get to formal classes. He developed the TTA business with a strong marketing drive including setting up a joint marketing agreement with Pitmans. He was also involved with the Organisation of Teachers of Transport Studies (OTTS - popularly known as the over-the-top society) later to become the Transport Studies Organisation (TSO) and although he recognised the reasons for the winding-up of that body in 2000 he was nvertheless saddened by it.

During his term as Director of Education and Training, Tony was responsible for the introduction of the Certificate in Transport qualification, to provide a more rigorous alternative to the Certificate of Professional Competence. He also started the process by which the Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Transport were established as educational qualifications to provide recognition of success by students in the two stages of the Professional Qualifying Examinations, for which previously no formal certificate had been issued. Perhaps drawing on his National Service experience, Tony was instrumental in forging links, and a route to Membership, , with the Master Drivers of the Royal Corps of Transport, a group of professionals hitherto unrecognised by the Institute. Tony also represented the Institute on the committees of many educational bodies and while recognising the need for education and qualifications to evolve, he was a strong supporter of academic standards and critical of any diminution of content or required level of achievement.

Tony was a keen genealogist and Chairman of the South Dorset Branch of the Somerset & Dorset Family History Society. He also ran the POMs Family History Association (PFHA) pursuing research worldwide into the surname Pomeroy and variants. Tony organised family reunions in 1997 and 2000 at Berry Pomeroy in Devon and the *Times* newspaper carried a report and picture of the first of these.

Tony maintained a strong sense of humour and was always a perfect gentleman. when he visited Nigeria for CIT, accompanied by Christine Beuret, she was late getting to Gatwick and they lost their Club Class seats. Tony did not even mildly grumble. Later when they arrived in Kano the hosts offered them one large double bed covered in red silk. Tony loudly announced "Doctor Beuret will sleep here - where is my bed ?" Another room was quickly organised.

In his retirement Tony became an active member of the committee of the Southern Section of CIT UK, and after 1999 of the Hampshire and Dorset Branch of ILT. He continued to maintain a strong interest in transport with regular contributions to debate both within and without the Institute. He contributed an interesting paper to the Roads and Road Transport History Association about the importance of the people who work in the industry, based on his management experience, and only two months before his death he provided some very useful comments and analysis on the situation of bus supply in Dorset and Somerset which were used in a report for the county Council.

Tony was a much valued friend and colleague to many and we shall sorely miss him. **JAH**

News from the 21st Century

Ransomes to cease lawnmower production

It was announced in July that Ransomes of Suffolk are to cease lawn mower prodction with the loss of some 200 jobs. The firm, which was taken over about four years ago by an American company, now trades as 'Textron Golf, Turf and Speciality Products', and will continue to operate a customer service base at Ipswich, as well as undertake some engineering work.

Ransomes began in the 18th century making agricultural machinery, and in 1832 the first lawnmower was made.....by 1892 the devices were petrol driven. Production of agricultural machines ceased in 1987, but manufacture of lawnmowers for parks and golf courses continued. A top of the range machine is priced at over £40,000.

Ransomes is mentioned here because it also produced road vehicles in the form of electric trucks (battery powered and marketed as "Orwell") and trolleybuses. The latter were used by Ipswich Corporation, of course! Production began in 1924 and ceased in 1940, but for three special orders for overseas built 1945-8.The Company had some success overseas, with orders from Cape Town, Singapore, Trinidad Drammen and George Town, Penang.

Southport Pier

The reconstructed Southport pier was opened in its full length in May. A 3' 6" tramway track has been laid in the centre of the board walk. At the landward end, the last few yards of track swing over to the left side. Hitherto, the pier tramway (which was latterly in the form of a miniature train) was laid on the left side of the pier and fenced off from the deck.

For the 2002 season a rubber-tyred "train" of the tractor-plus-trailer type found in many resorts and amusement parks has been operated, driving down the centre of the pier over the tramway tracks. The train is one of two, running off public roads, but on public footways, starting at the entrance to the pier. One train operates the pier service (fare £1.20) and the other runs a circular route along the promenade and through public gardens adjacent to the marine lake. The operation is by the Sefton Borough Council Leisure Services Department.

An artist's impression in the modern pavilion at the end of the pier depicts a two-unit tramcar, like a miniature Manchester Metrolink tram, which, it is

AA boxes to be phased out

It was announced in September that the AA are to discontinue the service provided by the once widely distributed AA Phone Boxes. The reason is the widespread use of mobile phones, which has reduced the number of calls from the boxes to less than 6000 per annum. The boxes have been around for ninety years and a few are to be left in situ as landmarks, some even being nominated for "listed building" status.

One feature concerning the boxes that has not survived and will not be preserved is the requirement of the AA patrol man to stand by the box and salute AA members passing in their cars.

Toll Motorway announced

News has been given of the progress of the so called Birmingham Avoiding Motorway, a road now being built with private money to the north of the M6/M5 intersection (Spaghetti Junction), and passing east of Birmingham to rejoin the M6 further south. The new route is to be called the **M6T** and will carry through traffic away from the congestion and peak hour gridlock experienced in the area between Junction 10 and Junction 6 of the M6. This will be the first toll **road** in Britain, as opposed to the existing tolls which relate to the use of **bridges or tunnels.**

Another Motorway proposal

Another relief road has been proposed further north on the M6. This is designated **A556(M)** and would form a spur from Junction 19 on the M6 to the M56 to Manchester and Manchester airport. It would relieve the congestion at Junction 20 of the M6, where it crosses the M56.

Lying between Junctions 20 and 21 of the M6 are the twin Thelwall Viaducts. Originally a single viaduct crossed the Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal here, east of Warrington. Because of pressure of traffic, a parallel viaduct was erected to the east during the last decade, allowing for the viaducts to carry four lanes of traffic in either direction. In the summer of this year, engineers discovered a damaged bearing atop one of the columns which supports the western (original) or northbound carriageway, and there was a weekend of traffic chaos whilst the east side (southbound) viaduct was 'coned' to take three lanes of traffic in either direction.

Work to repair the damaged bearing and to inspect all the other bearings supporting the original structure, built in the sixties, is expected to be completed before Christmas. Motorways, able to carry huge amounts of traffic when in good order, are beginning to suffer from the same problems as the railways when something goes wrong, efficient

BOOK REVIEW

THE WEYMANN STORY, Part 1 - 1923-1945. by John Senior, Alan Townsin and John Banks, and published 2002 by Venture Publications at £24.95. A4 size, 176 pages, and profusely illustrated with high quality black & white images.

This is no mere 'photo album' of buses. It tells a fascinating story of the origins of the Weymann bus factory at Addlestone, which were curious to say the least. I can do no better than quote from the book's own foreword.....

'How a group of well-heeled racing men put money into a venture to build aeroplanes, cars, and later, buses. How they were supported by a London bank, which, in partnership with a South African gold-mining company, financed and built a railway in Spain. How the fall of the Spanish Government led to the nonpayment of the greater part of the £2million bill. How the bank fell and the mining company only survived because South Africa followed Britain's lead and devalued its currency. How Prudential bought the Weymann shares as a promising investment, only to sell them to a shipping company, United Molasses....'

And there is much more: biographies of a number of industrial figures of the first half of the 20th century, insights into the financial and business affairs of other bus builders, and the industrial and social history of the Addlestone bus factory and the area where it lay.

The illustrations are well presented and have very detailed and accurate captions. The text is well written, well organised, and cannot fail to inform even the most well-read reader of the transport press. The author claims that it was 25 years in the making, requiring the tracking down old employees to verify aspects of the Weymann company's practices and much research into company histories and marketing agreements.

There is a great deal of explanation of how the factory worked and how the workforce was motivated, as well as the usual technical explanations of how the vehicles were put together. There were three types of body: all-metal, composite or 'coachbuilt', and flexible, this latter being a patented form of construction using special brackets and fittings securing a wooden framework.

We are also told the details of the relationship with Metro-Cammell at Birmingham, and how the jointly owned Metro-Cammell-Weymann sales arm distributed work on a 60-40 percentage basis between Birmingham and Addlestone. Weymann was a well respected coachbuilder, and this should be a well illustrated volume. A second part is promised !

THE TRAMWAYS OF LYTHAM St. ANNES by P.H.Abell, J.A.Garnham & I. McLoughlin published by Oakwood Press at £8.95. A5 size. prefect bound, 128 pages and well illustrated in black & white.

The Oakwood Press is a well-established publishing house of transport titles, and this book keeps up the quality expected. The text is very thorough and covers all aspects of the interesting tram system of the resort which lies immediately to the south of Blackpool, and whose trams had running rights over Blackpool metals as far north as Gynn Square.

First (1896-1903) there was one of the few gas tram installations of this country. The operating company purchased 20 gas trams, but after a period of mechanical problems also obtained 22 horse trams to work the service. The text does not state how they could afford the horses to propel these !

The tramway was electrified in 1903, and the new cars entered service in May. These were conventional open top 4 wheel cars, numbered 1-30. In view of the seasonal nature of the traffic, ten more double deck open top cars (31-40) were purchased of the open sided cross benc h type, and after a while cars 21-30 were rebuilt at the UEC car works Preston to conform to this design. These became the "trademark" cars of the Lytham system.

The St. Annes U.D.C. purchased the tramway from the company in 1920, and the cars were given the title "St.Annes Council Tramways", but in 1922 St.Annes U.D.C. and Lytham U.D.C. merged, and the cars now carried " Lytham St.Annes Corporation Tramways." Ten new well appointed double-deck "Pullman" cars (41-50) were delivered in 1924 to work the all-year-round basic service, and the tramway continued in service until buses took over in 1937.

There is a very comprehensive array of photographs to support the text, most of good quality, although some of the pages of this A5 size book are a little crowded with three photographs and captions crammed on. Every aspect of the rolling stock is shown, and there is a "route survey" showing trams at the various locations they reached, including pictures in Blackpool., and pictures of Blackpool cars on that curious stretch of track between Squires Gate (where the Lytham St. Annes depot was situated) and Starr Gate on the South Promenade. This lay disused from the end of the summer season in 1939 until the summer of 1957, when it was reopened for circular tours by tram until the Squires Gate tram route cloased in 1961.(Surely there is a record there !)

There are several appendices, one of which is a reprint of Winstan Bond's article in the *Modern Tramway* of plans for a Lytham - Southport tram line, crossing the Ribble by transporter bridge. **ARP**

Municipal Transport in Great Britain

Our tables in the last edition of Newsletter drew a number of interesting comments, and it is our intention to publish an improved list in due course. John Howie, who had compiled the prototype list, wrote as follows:

"My initial aim was merely to record the trail of municipal investment in public transport - it would have been too complicated to include all the idiosyncrasies of individual cases (even if I had the information !)

"However, I am a bit concerned about some of the discrepancies in dates (usually one year), both as regards inauguration and change in status. I have taken commencement of operations as the date the first tram was operated (rather than the date of transfer from a private undertaking) as the former is available from published sources (whereas the latter is in Council records.)

"An example of this is Chester where corporation trams did not run until 1903 despite the system being acquired the previous year. Obviously the earlier date is the better, but in some cases I have been unable to find it."

In the above, John draws attention to the problem of "date of commencement," and has preferred to take the date of the operation of the first (electric ?) tram in public service, which usually is the date quoted in works of reference. However this can become confused with the date the first trial run was made, or the date of the BoT inspection.

However, the example mentioned (Chester) really does have two dates. Ist January 1902 was the date the Corporation took over the existing horse tramway which it continued to work. The only changes were the name painted on the cars and the fare scale, which was reduced. Money was borrowed to acquire the undertaking, and some revenue was spent in running repairs during 1902.

During the course of 1902 plans were drawn up for electrification, and a more substantial loan was arranged. Reconstruction of the route was undertaken between December 1902 and April 1903, when the electric service commenced. The construction of two new routes and purchase of more cars required a further loan in 1906.

This pattern contrasts with towns whose first tramway was electric, or other towns which pur-

It has also been pointed out that "municipal transport" can take various forms other than street tramways or motor bus or trolleybus operations for members of the public who pay a fare.. Although our listing declared that only 17 towns still retained "municipal transport", many more local authorities provide specialised transport in their own marked vehicles for special groups within the community (the disabled, the aged and school children). One such authority, Wigan, uses minibuses painted in the former municipal transport department colours. Of course, many authorities put such work out to tender and vehicles owned by a variety of owners provide the required services.

It is perhaps not generally realised that transport for certain groups (welfare transport) has been a compulsory duty for local authorities for well over half a century, and some municipal transport departments provided special vehicles or used ordinary vehicles for this work. In other towns it was another municipal department which kept and operated the vehicles (Welfare, Education or Health Department.)

Other forms of transport remaining under municipal control are cliff (funicular) railways such as the two at Scarborough, and vertical lifts, as found on the North Promenade at Blackpool.

BRITISH ROADS FEDERATION

The following facts regarding the erstwhile British Roads Federation (BRF) have been supplied by Richard Storey.

*** The BRF closed down in 2001.**

*** The BRF Library has gone to the University of Glamorgan.**
Contact Prof. Stuart Cole
School of Technology
Division of Environment and Technology

*** The BRF Archive has gone to the Institute of Civil Engineers**

Municipal Transport in Great Britain

Further notes under this heading will appear in Newsletter 31 in November. A second feature is planned on the B.E.T. and other company operated tramway systems, many of which had tracks owned by municipalities. Of course, there were many track owning authorities, some quite small, and some which wielded an influence quite out of keeping with their size.

Another aspect which we woukd like to explore is instances of municipal tramways which engaged in activities other than that of carrying passengers. Manchester had an extensive parcels service, Huddersfield carried coal etc.

See also below and page 15 for some thoughts on parcels traffic. Was it best by bus, by a general carrier, or as today, by "white van" ???

The carriage of parcels by road today is mainly done by express carriers using vans. The ubiquitous Ford Transit and similar vans cover the whole country. How many firms are engaged in this trade ? Are they all country-wide ? Do they belong to the larger transport groups operating larger vehicles ? Are they independent ? what effects have they had on the railways and the Post Office ? Who are their main customers ? How many firms and how many vehicles are involved ?


LLANELLY STATION
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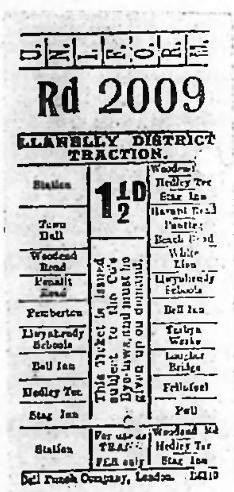
15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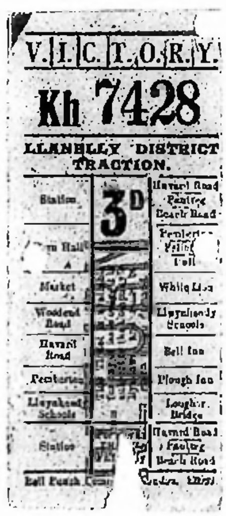
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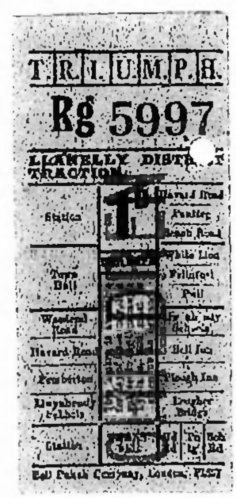
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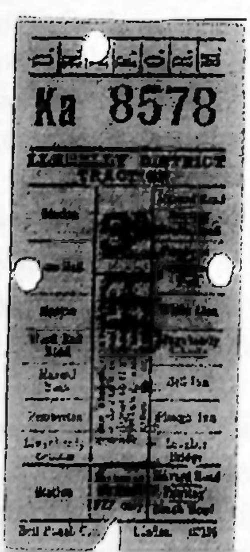
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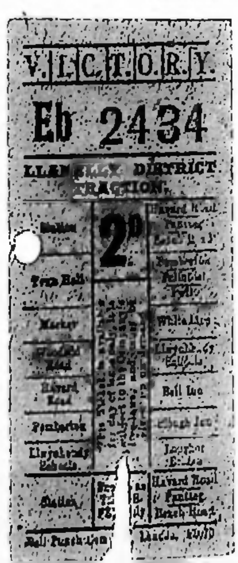
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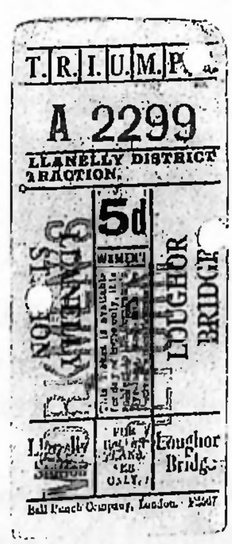
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Llanelly District Traction

An article by Ron Phillips, written for publication in the *Leyland Society Journal,* No.4, July 2002. This article has been slightly revised for publication by the R&RTHA.

Earlier this year I came across the two pictures seen at the bottom of this page in a box of old postcards in a collector's shop. They were in fact 620 size snapshots, and were priced at 50p each.

Having purchased them, I set about looking into the history of the operator. I was able, through the good offices of Rosy Thacker, (the T.M.S. Librarian) to obtain some details of the tramway operation, and found an article in "Buses Illustrated" written some years ago by Tony Newman, which gave some information on the trolleybuses. However, the Llanelly system is not one which has been well documented, and even the usually throrough PSV Circle do not give the fullest detail on the trolleybuses and motorbuses of the Llanelly company. (See fleet history of the South Wales Transport Co. Ltd.)

When speaking with Roger Atkinson, he drew my attention to a peculiar feature of the tickets used at Llanelly. (See illustration opposite) The pre 1939 trolleybus tickets carried the letters U.N.I.F.O.R.M. above the serial number, for use in cancelling (as shown) the Returns, instead of the initial letters of the seven days of the week. The reason for this choice is unknown.

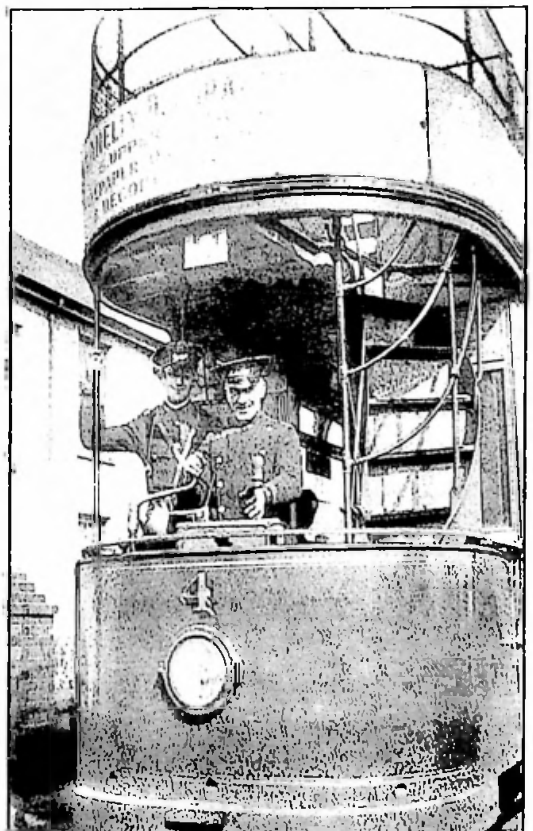
During the Second World War, the letters were changed to V.I.C.T.O.R.Y., and after 1945 they were again changed to read T.R.I.U.M.P.H.

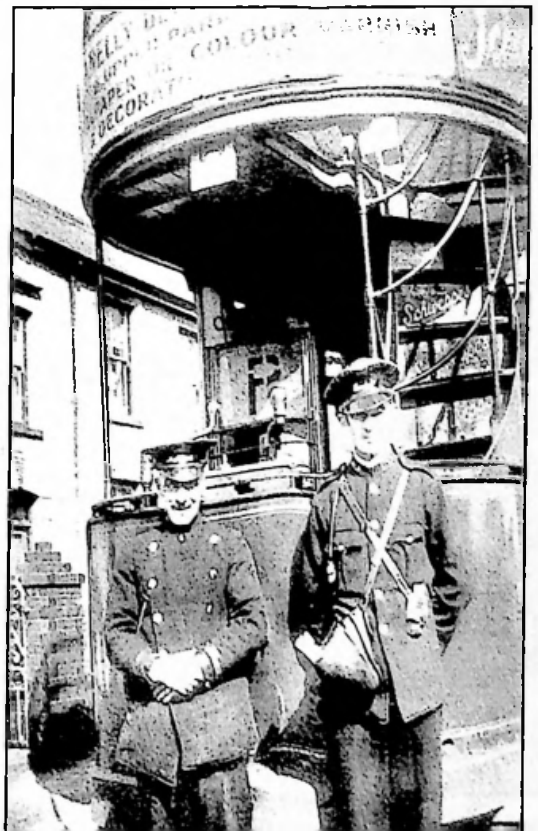
These pictures of Llanelly tram No.4 illustrate the profile of a typical tram crew in the early thirties. The older driver has probably worked many years as 'senior' man, but the younger conductor would probably be more readily trained to drive a motor bus. The driver would consider a move to working on the back platform as a loss of status. This was the problem which Leyland tried to address by starting the manufacture trolley-buses and gearless motor-buses.

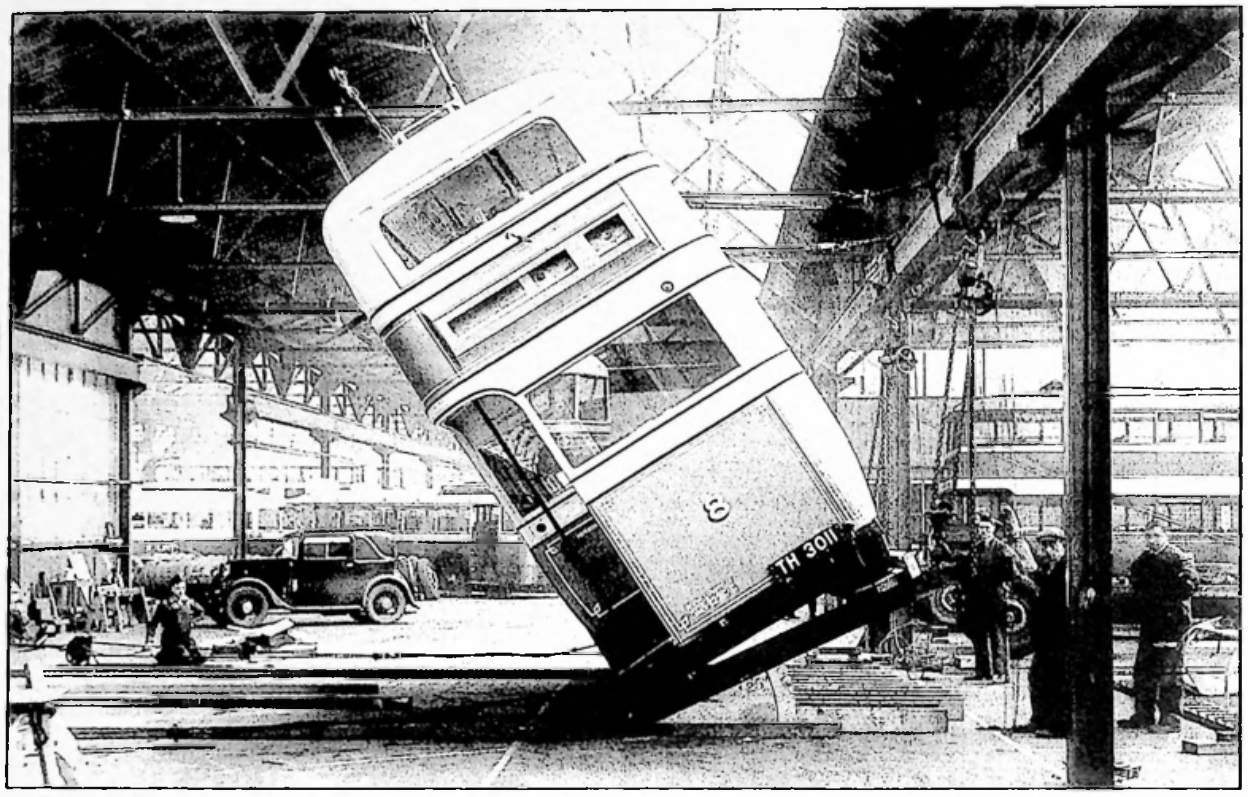
Note the conductor is wearing a waterproof cover on his cap and has a whistle....both needed for working on the open upper deck. His coat collar shows the initials "L.D.L.R." (see text).

The stair risers carry enamelled plates that advertise Shweppes mineral waters. These were later transferred to the stair risers of the trolleybuses.

(Photos : R. Phillips collection)

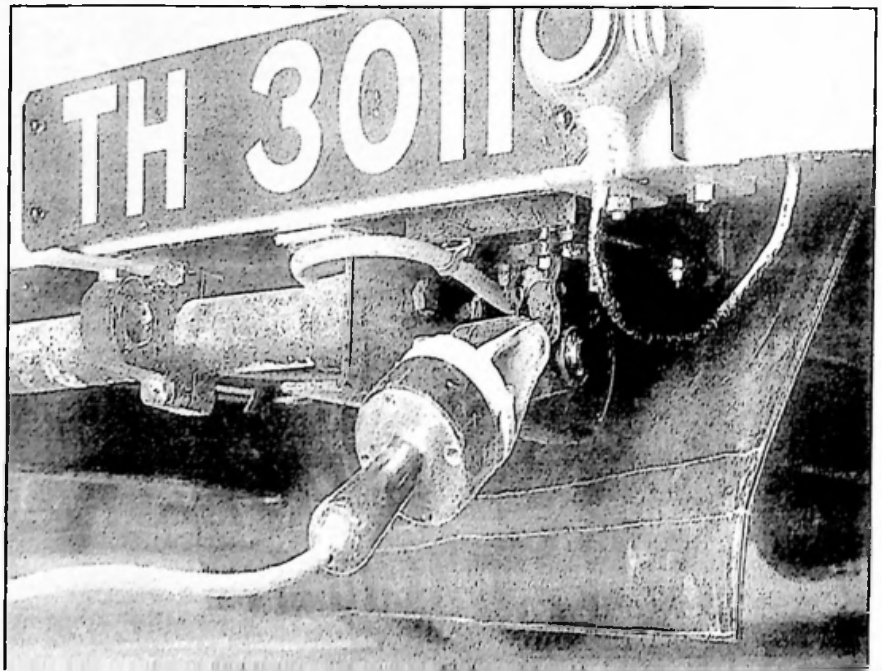






Why was it that manufacturers were so fond of photographing double deck buses undergoing a tilt test ? By the 1930s, the unstable looking top-covered monsters of the previous decade had been replaced by low-loading vehicles, and were so numerous on the roads that passengers surely needed no more reassurance that the vehicle was likely to topple over. Accidents involving buses falling over are a quite rare, well outnumbered by accidents involving double deckers losing their roof under low bridges as a result of careless driving .

This view at the Leyland Works shows Llanelly trolleybus number 8 undergoing a tilt test. The rear design shows much affinity with the type of highbridge body produced by Leyland for the TD2 motor-bus. To the right is a prototype trolleybus, ressembling a Titan with bonnet and half-cab, and which had been used on demonstration service at Birmingham. To the left are a number of Premier Line TS3 Tigers, reposessed by Leyland and soon to be supplied on to Mr.Sword of Western S.M.T. (See cover picture, Newsletter No.21) *(Llanelly trolleybus pictures from BCVM Archive)*



The picture to the left shows the skate attachment below the rear panel on Llanelly No.8. Here the skate is plugged in, and the cable can be seen. Attached to this cable were a series of metal "tennis balls" which were dragged along in the tram rails, with much sparking. Most certainly a practice which would not be allowed these days !

Note also the "old-fashioned" design of the rear light, whose bulb also lit the registration plate.

The 14 trolleybuses built by Leyland in 1932 to replace Llanelly's trams were of great significance in Leyland Motors' history. Although trolleybuses had been supplied to Bradford Corporation (indirectly via English Electric) and to Birmingham Corporation (in the form of modified TD1 chassis) before this date, the Llanelly ones were the first production trolleybuses built by the Company after the Board of Directors had decided to offer a full range of trolley vehicles in conjunction with the General Electric Co. Ltd.(GEC) of Witton, Birmingham.

This decision was a somewhat reluctant one, as at the time Leyland's engineers knew very little about the characteristics of electrically driven buses. In view of the batch of Titan TD1 style trolley-buses built for Birmingham, some might think that the Llanelly TB2s were "a version of the TD2 with a full front", but this is too simplistic an idea. It had been realised that trolley vehicles required a much more robust transmission and braking system, different lighting circuitry, stonger body pillars and roofs and specialised motors. The latter, to be mounted under the floor, had to be resistent to the effects of dust and water thrown up from the road, yet also had to be well ventilated to prevent overheating. Hence the decision to invite GEC to be partners in the venture and to design and provide the electrical equipment.

Leyland feared in 1930-1931 that the general move in Britain to abandon tramways would see an upsurge in municipal authorities choosing trolleybuses rather than motor buses, in part to keep a market for municipally generated power, and in part to retain the services of tram drivers who felt uneasy about their ability to control heavy motor vehicles equipped with crash gearboxes. The fear was heightened by the fact that AEC had already co-operated with the English Electric Company (EEC) of Preston to introduce a range of troleybuses. Leyland Motors therefore opted to build trolleybuses and at the same time to develop the torque converter "gear less" transmission for motor buses. Both would help secure for the Company a share of the new buses needed to replace trams and employ their former drivers. Leyland had already had success in its sale of tramway replacement buses in towns such as Ayr, Chatham, Gravesend, Lincoln and Wigan, where Titans had (to use Leyland's own publicity phrase), 'buried the trams'.

The new Trolleybus Range

To meet the challenge, four types of trolleybus chassis were designed and three proto-types built. A single deck 32 seater and a 3 axle double decker for the home market remained as 'demonstrators', and a 3 axle front-loading single decker for export was sent to Australia (see Journal No.3, page 4). The Llanelly and went straight into service.

As things turned out, this fleet of 14 vehicles with Leyland timber framed bodywork was free from trouble, and the majority served Llanelly for the full time-span of the trolleybus service in that town.

The Llanelly system

The electric tram came quite late to Llanelly, the three-route system being opened in 1911. It was owned by Llanelly & District Electric Lighting and Traction Co. and the tramway operation used the title of **Llanelly & District Light Railways**. The parent company was a member of the Balfour Beatty Group which had road transport interests in Scotland and the Midlands In March 1924, the Llanelly company changed its title to the Llanelly & District Electric Supply Co and the tramway operation subsequently became **Llanelly District Traction**. In1930, it sought powers to abandon the light railways and replace them with trolleybuses.

The Notts & Derby Traction Co, another of the subsidiaries of Balfour Beatty had done the same, and it introduced a fleet of AEC and English Electric trolleybuses in January 1932. Although the tram tracks at Llanelly were worn out, the economic problems of the times delayed things, and it was not until after the inauguration of trolley vehicles by the Notts & Derby company that orders were given to proceed with the conversion at Llanelly.

It was fully expected that Balfour Beatty would insist on the AEC/English Electric combination for its second trolleybus scheme. The Leyland Sales Manager for the South Wales Area paid several visits during the spring and summer of 1932 to Llanelly, trying to persuade the local management of the good reasons for choosing Leylands. It was not until early August that a decision was reached, not at Llanelly, but at the London offices of Balfour Beatty, and it gave Leyland great pleasure to receive its very first order for trolleybuses of the new Leyland/GEC range. There was no time to build a prototype. Work had commenced in Llanelly during the same month to put up overhead wiring, and the poor state of the tramway tracks and the fact that the town had been kept waiting over two years since the first announcement of the changeover from trams to trolley vehicles put pressure on Leyland to deliver the fleet of buses as soon as possible.Balfour Beatty itself erected the new overhead by direct labour, using the team from the Notts & Derby changeover.

The Llanelly Trolleybuses

The contract was won after much hard work and Leyland had very little time to complete it. The Llanelly company would have liked all the vehicles before the end of 1932, but this was impossible.In the

January 1933 and the remainder in February.. The Leyland works was on "short-time working" late in 1932, and the pressure from Llanelly to deliver the trolleybuses caused a problem. The team working on the trolleybuses was paid overtime to work on both Saturdays and Sundays to complete sufficient vehicles to takeover one of the tram services from 26th December . This, of course, caused a problem with the workforce not engaged on the job ! Additionally, the task of towing the vehicles safely from Leyland to Llanelly proved "difficult." One wonders what route they took in those days.

The bodies made by Leyland were timber framed and show some of the characteristics embodied in the "vee-front" all-metal design produced towards the end of 1933. That type of body had some severe weaknesses, but the majority of the timber-framed TB2s at Llanelly survived for the full 20 years life of the system, some being rebuilt without the half drop windows after World War Two, and all being reseated with 56 seats.

The specification of the 14 buses included a heavy duty 8 inch worm centre rear axle, motors and control gear by GEC, Peters air brakes, and highbridge bodywork seating 50. Curiously there was a "skate" included in the specification . This device has been described as "looking like a string of sausages", but in fact the one supplied by Leyland ressembled a number of tennis balls spaced out on a wire. Skates were used to allow trollebuses to travel along streets only equipped with a single positive overhead wire for trams. One trolley pole of the bus would pick up the current from the overhead wire, and the necessary negative return was made by trailing the skate in the tram lines. It was not permitted for trolley vehicles to carry passengers when moving by this method, and the speed would be limited by the skill of the driver in following the tram lines as well as the overhead! The conductor, provided with a stout pair of rubber gloves, was required to supervise the progress of the skate and replace it in the tramway tracks should it bounce out. Altogether a dangerous procedure !

The skate was introduced in the first instance to allow early trackless-trolley vehicles operating on isolated routes to return to the tram depot (it was not thought worthwhile to erect double overhead which would see little use). Early trolleybus systems such as Aberdare and Wigan used the skate.. It was also quite often utilised for demonstrating trolleybuses in towns with existing tramways and which were contemplating using 'trackless' vehicles. Why it was thought necessary to equip the Llanelly buses with skates is not known, and the devices, if used at all, would only have been necessary for the few weeks February 1933. Once the tram tracks were filled in with tar (which was done at Llanelly) or removed from the carriageway, they were redundant.

Another fact strongly suggests that the skates were not used in the town. When the erection of trolleybus overhead took place, the new wiring was positioned 18 inches higher than the tram wires had been, so it seems unlikely that the new vehicles were required to move by means of the lower tramway overhead. (The trams were open-topped, the new buses were full highbridge types.)

The Llanelly District Traction Leyland TB2 trolleybuses carried fleet numbers 1 to 12 and 14 to 15 (the number 13 was not used) and were registered TH 3004-17. The chassis numbers were in the group 2022-35. All bar numbers 1-3, 11 and 14 lasted until the end of the system, which closed in late 1952 after purchase of the undertaking by South Wales Transport Co. of Swansea. It had, of course, been owned by a company which generated electricity, and this had been nationalised along with all other such British companies in 1948. The new nationalised entity did not wish to continue as a bus and trolleybus operator, so the undertaking was sold to South Wales in 1952.By this time, LDT had ordered 11 double deck buses from trolleybus replacement, but these were delivered to South Wales (Nos.414-24.)

Although he new Leyland TB2s were very soundly made and gave little trouble, the Leyland engineers were summoned to Llanelly early on after complaints about uneven brake lining wear. It was discovered that drivers had been operating the vehicles with the left foot permanently resting on the brake pedal. Old habits die hard ! Tram drivers, of course, when releasing the hand brake on a tram to move off, would wind the handle back to the point at which the brakes were about to bite, to facilitate a quick action when next required to stop.

As seen above, Llanelly District Traction also operated motor buses. Amongst these were a number of very low single deckers, designed to pass under some very low railway bridges in the docks area of the town. South Wales, when ordering new vehicles for the services in 1959 and 1963, were obliged to use AEC Regent double deck chassis on which Roe mounted 37 seat front-entrance single deck bodies. (TCY 101-102, Nos. 33-34 and 279-284 DWN, Nos.35-40). The previous LDT vehicles were 20-21 of 1947 (AEC Regal/Strachan) and 17-8,23, 30-2 of 1950 (AEC Regal/Bruce).

The trolleybuses described were joined by several Guys in the thirties and 12 Karrier W type wartime utility vehicles (Nos.37-48) in 1945-6. These were sold for further service in Bradford (10) and

Municipal Transport in Great Britain

Exeter's Taste in Passenger Transport

Commercial Motor for February 11th 1938 carried the following article about the municipal transport undertaking of the city of Exeter. It makes an interesting read in many ways, for its historical content, of course, but also for the 'interview' style in which it is written. One wonders if the General Manager really had had enough by the end (see last lines).

Exeter's municipal transport manager, Mr. W. Y. Smith-Saville, M.Inst.T., is fortunate in one way at least. The population of Exeter, totalling some 66,000, is willing to spend upwards of £80,000 per annum on bus fares, travelling on the corporation vehicles. that £80,000 shows an increase of 100% on the corresponding expenditure (regarding it from the point of view of the public) or revenue (regasrding it as Mr. Smith-Saville does) since the buses replaced the trams seven years ago.

"How far do your services extend ? I asked.

"Not beyond the city boundaries. The longest route is only 2½ miles, and the conditions are rather ....."

"I know. The congestion is terrible and the streets are narrow."

"And when the worst of the congestion is behind, there are the hills."

"Yes, I suppose your drivers must make abnormal use of the intermediate gears, hardly ever in 'top', I should think. How many buses have you ?"

"Fifty-eight."

"Any oilers ?"

"Yes. 23, and four more are on order. Most of them are Leylands."

"How do you find the oil engines compare with petrol engines for maintenance cost ?"

"They cost less."

"Your system of maintenance is pretty thorough, I should imagine."

Oilers Need Care

"Definitely. That is more essential for oil engines than for petrol. Indeed, I should say that careful maintenance is the secret of success. There is one point about oil engines, however, that I should like to mention, especially with regard to the factor of maintenance.

engine must be on top of its job. What I mean is this: for a given power requirement, the oil engine selected should be a little larger than the petrol engine which would be chosen for the same purpose."

"Do you think that the owner of only one or two vehicles is as well advised to select oil-engined chassis as the operator who owns a big fleet ? I have in mind the fact that it is difficult for the smaller operator to organise his maintenance work along regular lines, such as seem desirable in the case of oil engines - more necessary, at any rate, than when only petrol engines are employed."

"I agree that maintenance cannot be neglected to the same extent as with petrol engines. But I have noticed that the smaller operator has become much more efficient. lately, in handling the oil engine than he was quite a short time ago. there is much less emission of smoke and lessof the characteristic oiler odour than used to be the case.

"My principal anxiety when I first introduced oil engined buses into Exeter was that there would be objections because of the smell. With narrow streets and such congestion as is the rule in this city, the risk of annoyance is so much greater. Actually, I have had only one complaint and that was quickly and effectively answered."

"How long have you been using oil engines ?"

"Four years. It was my view that there was no justification for us to take upon ourselves the role of pioneers."

"Do you carry on all maintenance and repairs under your own roof ?"

"Yes. Everything, with these minor exceptions: -We do not replate batteries, because that work can be done so cheaply and well by specialists; we do not repair upholstery, because there is not sufficient work to keep a man employed economically, and we put out the very small amount of welding that is needed."

"You do your own rebores ?"

"Yes"

"Hone or...?"

"Van Norman."

"I see you operate a few single deckers."

"Yes. there are one or two railway bridges in the town, which make that course necessary. I use them also in connection with the late trains from town. We meet these trains and charge a flat fare of 6d."

"Some of these single deckers I [illegible]

persuaded to use them as they are intended to be used, that is to say, the rear door for entrance and the front door for exit. but passengers will not.

"We tried very hard to make them do so, but the climax, and the end of our efforts, came when a muscular woman passenger actually ejected the conductor before making her exit by the 'entrance.' she said she was going to leave the bus by whatever door she pleased, rules or no rules.

"After that we gave up the job. We shall have no more double doored vehicles. If they are not used as they should be, they tend to create difficulties for the conductor, and moreover are potential causes of accidents."

Turning to some charts on the wall, I observed that, with the exception of two notable peaks, the diagrams of revenue returns showed that the income was steady throughout the year.

"Yes. the peaks shown were at the Coronation Week and at Christmas Shopping week. Both the Coronation and Jubilee were very useful to us. Usually there is a drop during the first week in February because about that time in this part of the country, we often experience a cold snap and people either stay indoors or, if they have to go out, prefer to walk. This year the cold snap did not come."

Illuminating Returns

"Revenue returns can be highly illuminating at times." Mr. Smith-Saville continued. "The service from St. David's Station used to bring in a revenue of 16d. per mile in the old days. Now it is difficult to earn much more than 10d.

"That change can be due only to the fact that people from the surrounding villages and towns coming into Exeter for shopping, cinema-going or other purposes do so by road, using the long-distance coach services instead of the railway. In other words, my revenue figures for that route are a definite indication that the railway has lost to the road a good deal of that class of traffic."

"And the future, Mr. Smith-Saville ? Upon what lines are you going to develop ? Waht type of bus do you propose to purchase ?"

"We shall buy no more petrol vehicles, but shall concentrate on oil-engined machines in the future.We shall reduce the percentage of single deckers, and, on our double deckers, we shall have curved staircases.

"Passengers are too apt, on straight staircases, to run down them as they do downstairs at home. the curved stairs make them think and suggest to them that it is just as well to take hold of the handrail. That is all I care to say just now." (STR)

Some Notes on the Exeter Fleet

The trams in Exeter were replaced in 1931. Up to that time, the municipal motor buses (introduced in 1929) were dual entrance 32 seat single deckers (as recalled on the left in the incident with the woman) Unusually, these all had (with the exception of a small capacity Commer) bodies by Northern Counties of Wigan.....not a make of bus body commonly found in Devon.

In 1930 four double deckers were loaned in order to choose the most suitable type of vehicle to replace the trams. The resulting order was placed for 15 AEC Regent with Ransomes 48 seat double deck bodies similar to the London ST class (Nos.16-30) and 10 Leyland Titan TD1s with Brush 48 seater bodies of conventional appearance but fitted with straight staircases like the AECs (Nos.31-40). The lower deck seating capacity on these double deckers was 20.

In 1933 an AEC Regent demonstrator registered AML 300 joined the fleet, followed in 1934 by a Leyland TD3c demonstrator registered TJ 5043. Both vehicles had Weymann bodies with "normal" staircases. The Leyland had a torque converter, but despite the problems caused by congestion and hilly terrain mentioned in the interview, this type of "gear less" transmission did not find favour in Exeter.

In 1935, five Bristols with Gardner 5LW oil engines were taken into stock (Nos.44-48), and in 1937 12 Leyland Titan TD5s with Leyland bodies and oil engines arrived (Nos.49-60).

Finally, during the year in which the interview took place, 1938, Exter took 12 more Leyland TD5s numbered 61-64, 2,3,10,23-27 and six single deckers (Nos. 65-70.) These were on Leyland Tiger TS8 chassis and had Craven 32 seat bodies with rear platforms.

Subsequent history

No more new buses were delivered until the wartime period, and after the war Exeter took buses of Daimler, Leyland and Guy manufacture. In 1947 an a greement was made with Devon General to operate joint services, and this extended the area of operation from the constrained 2½ miles of the 1930s to 10-12 miles from the city centre.Devon General, however, now operated some city services.

No new vehicles were delivered between 1950-1956, and for a time the undertaking was without a General Manager. Talks to sell the operation to Devon General then fell through, and the corporation owned transport department continued until eventual sale to Devon General in 1970. Subsequently the city became

Send Your Parcels by Bus

Many small (goods) carriers evolved into bus operators. In the days before the general use of cars and (hire) vans by the population, the bus operator would also carry small parcels. This was usually done by bus companies big and small in country areas, but was less common in towns.

The large operators were able to offer delivery over a large area, and illustrated below are tickets and a list of agencies maintained by Midland "Red." Crosville could probably claim to be able to deliver parcels to most parts of North Wales, and the service survived into the seventies, the last series of parcel tickets being illustrated by a picture of a Leyland National.

Has the subject of sending parcels by bus been studied ? Is there a country-wide study of the subject? It is known that the parcels services of certain individual operators has been dealt with in the various bus company histories published. We would like to know more. For instance, could a parcel cross a boundary between, say Western National and Devon General ?

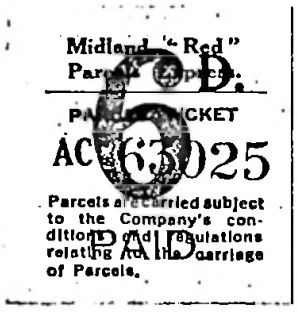
PARCELS OFFICES

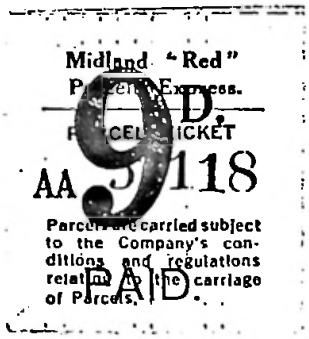
		Telephone Nos.
Chief Parcels Office	**54, Dudley Street (Near Station Street)**	**Mid. 1152.**
BIRMINGHAM	Chief Offices, Bearwood	Bearwood 2020.
BIRMINGHAM	Bull Ring	Midland 4481.
BIRMINGHAM .. .. (Garage and Coach Station)	Digbeth..	Midland 4900.
BIRMINGHAM	9, Gt. Charles Street ..	Central 7313.
BANBURY (Office)	Bridge Street	Banbury 368.
BRIERLEY HILL	Garage, Harts Hill ..	Brierley Hill 7440.
BROMSGROVE (Office)	High Street	Bromsgrove 223.
COALVILLE (Garage) ..	Ashby Road	Coalville 123.
COVENTRY .. .. .. (Office and Bus Station)	Pool Meadow	Coventry 3536.
DROITWICH (Office).. ..	Victoria Square ..	Droitwich 43.
DUDLEY (Garage)	Birmingham Road ..	Dudley 2518.
EVESHAM	18, High Street ..	Evesham 396.
HEREFORD (Office) ..	Union Street	Hereford 2438.
KIDDERMINSTER (Garage)	New Road	Kidderminster 108.
LEAMINGTON	The Parade	Leamington 194.
LEICESTER (Office)	60, Granby Street ..	Leicester 59275.
LEICESTER (Garage) ..	Southgate Street ..	Leicester 58268.
MALVERN	Belle Vue	Malvern 390.
NUNEATON	Bondgate	Nuneaton 213.
REDDITCH (Garage) ..	Church Road	Redditch 402.
RUGBY (Garage)	Railway Terrace ..	Rugby 594.
SHREWSBURY (Office) ..	The Square	Shrewsbury 2485.
STAFFORD (Office)	Market Square.. ..	Stafford 432.
STOURBRIDGE (Bus Station)	Foster Street	Stourbridge 5487.
SUTTON COLDFIELD (Office)	The Parade	Sutton Coldfield 1687
SWADLINCOTE (Garage) ..	Midland Road ..	Swadlincote 0258.
TAMWORTH (Garage) ..	Aldergate	Tamworth 90.
WELLINGTON (Office) ..	Queen Street	Wellington 239.
WOLVERHAMPTON (Garage)	Bilston Street	Wolverhampton 21366
WORCESTER— ('Bus Stn. & Enquiry Office)	Angel Place	Worcester 1296.

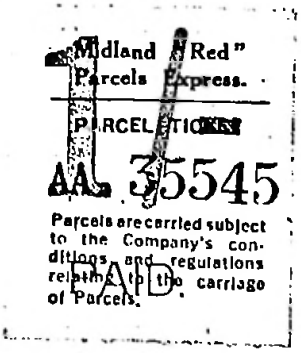
PARCELS RECEIVING OFFICES IN ALL MIDLAND TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

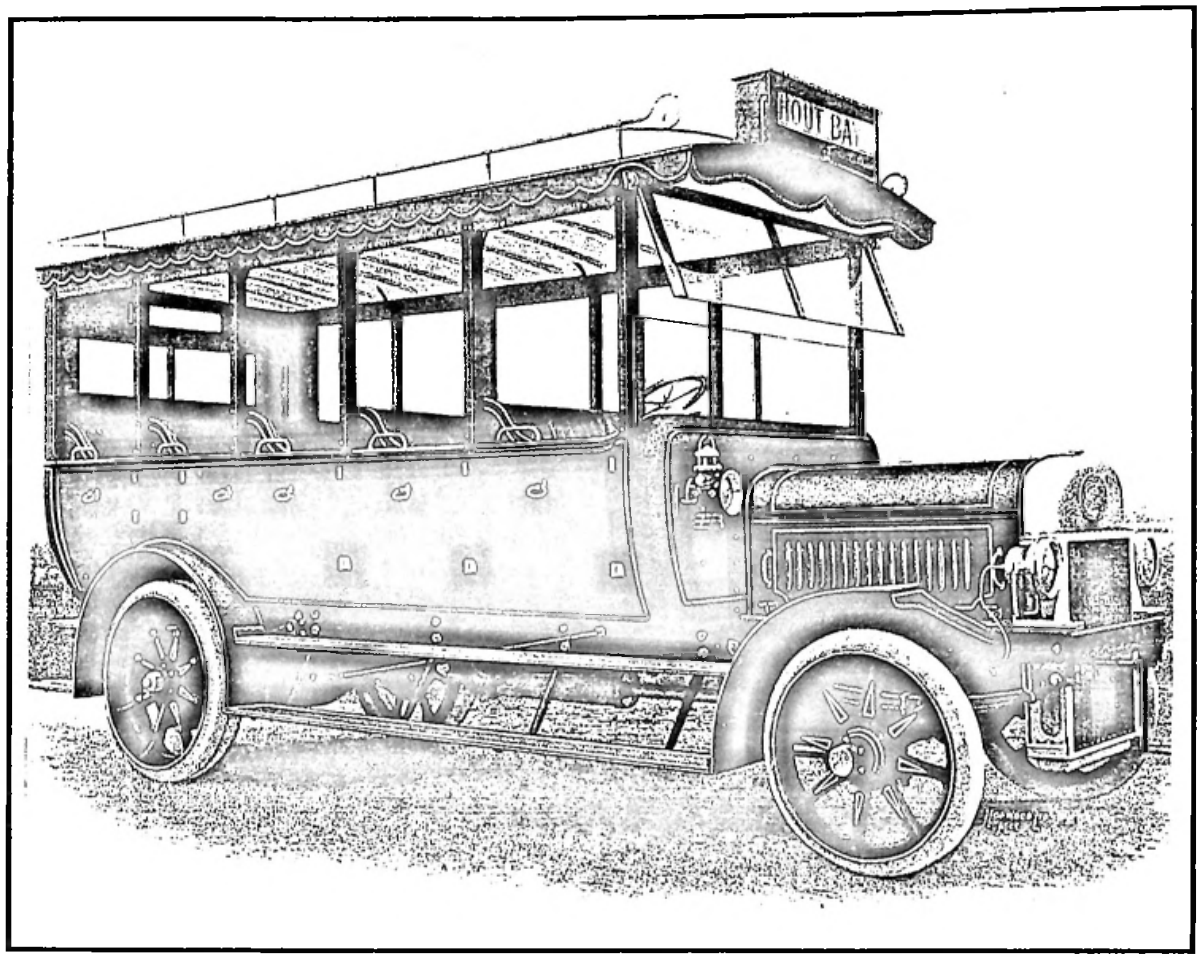
LOOK FOR THE SIGN—

MIDLAND "RED" PARCELS AGENCY









Early Motor Transport

The illustration shows a "char-a-banc" built c1912 for Cape Town by Leyland Motors Limited. Similar machines were supplied to Lisbon at about the same time. This precise design of vehicle is not of the type normally described as a "char-a-banc" At first such vehicles were based on lorry chassis and had a boat-like and often demountable body, usually with a folding hood, which allowed for the vehicle to operate as a lorry or as a passenger vehicle as desired.

In the twenties, as the larger bus companies evolved, the demountable body became less prevalent, and the bodywork became more and more complex, gaining side windows. The ultimate development was the "QP" body = Quadruple Purpose. this type could operate in four guises, according to the weather conditions and the desire of the passengers. The first choice was as a completely open vehicle, the second was to retain the open sides but to lower the hood (perhaps not a common choice, but necessary in hot climates, hench the roofed design above for Cape Town and Lisbon. A third option was to raise the window glasses but retain an open roof, and this might be done in windy conditions.

The fourth and final option was to lower the hood and raise the windows, producing a fully enclosed vehicle. The QP enjoyed a brief popularity in the period 1926-30, one of the chief bodybuilders being London Lorries Ltd. The next stage of evolution was to build enclosed saloon type vehicles with wind-down windows and either a canvas folding central roof or a sliding "sunshine" roof. All of these types of coach were prone to water penetration with far two many apertures of one kind or another, Today, of course, the coach is fully sealed and air conditioned, with tinted glass to counter the glare of the sun !

The vehicle for Cape Town as illustrated was supplied to a subsidiary of the Britisah owned tramway company which traded as Charabancs Limited. The purpose was sightseeing and excursions, and the subsidiary company survied into modern times. The examples supplied to Lisbon were to develop feeder routes, such as to Carnide and Bemfica, to the electric tram service. In the sub-tropical climate passengers were not concerned about the lack of windows, as many of the tramcars were of the toast-rack layout.