

Newsletter

No. 38
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The Roads & Road Transport History Association

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J LYONS & CO.

The publication of John Edser's talk on his time as a Lyons' Cakes van-boy, 1956-1960, in the *R&RTHA Chairman's Bulletin* in January 2004 has drawn attention to the major importance of J Lyons & Co Ltd in developing efficient distribution of perishable food, in Britain, in and beyond the first half of the twentieth century. This had not passed unrecognised by the authors of the *Companion to British Road Haulage History*; an extensive entry, by Richard Storey, will be found at pp.242-244 of that work.

Among the sources quoted in the *Companion*, is the definitive history of the J Lyons & Co enterprise in all its aspects, *The First Food Empire* by Peter Bird. This is a book, published in 2000, by

Phillimore & Co Ltd, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester PO20 6BG (Tel: 01243 787636). The price is £25.00. It is also available from www.amazon.co.uk at the same price. Hardback with 400 pages 240 illustrations.

There is also now, a Lyons website www.kzwp.com/lyons, created by David Lawrence – and, with John Edser's permission, his Van-boy article has been put on to it. Click on Anecdote Index and then Van Boy, under the Bakery heading. David Lawrence can be contacted on lawrence@carol.net.

Peter Bird, a former director of Lyons Information Systems Ltd, and the author of *The First Food Empire*, has contributed the following article to *Newsletter*.



J. Lyons & Co Ltd

A Short Account of Road Transport

For over thirty years following its formation in 1887, the transport delivery systems of J. Lyons & Co Ltd were based on the ubiquitous horse-drawn van. Products manufactured at Cadby Hall – initially bread and pastry goods but later tea, coffee and cocoa – were all sold from handcarts and horse-drawn vehicles. The stabling facilities became extensive, and as the business grew so more space was allocated to stabling in the north-west part of the factory. Early records reveal that the overall cost of keeping the horses was higher than the cost of employing salesmen. At one time over 1,000 horses were used by Lyons, operating from Cadby Hall and depots up and down the country, and the company had horse-van repair shops at London, Birmingham and Liverpool. As the combustion engine gradually took over from the horse, many

of the horse-van bodies were converted into motor bodies.

The years immediately following the First World War were revolutionary for the Lyons Transport Department. In 1919 Walter Henry Gaunt, formerly a distribution superintendent for the Board of Trade, was recruited as distribution manager. Gaunt was both acclaimed and influential in transport circles and in his work for Lyons he is credited with having facilitated much of the evolution from horse-drawn to motor transport. Each of Lyons' factories had its own dispensary – an area in which daily production was assembled before dispatch, which normally contained up to three days' output to allow for the fluctuations of orders and weather. With the exception of northern Scotland and the west of

Ireland, every village and town in Britain was served by Lyons' local cash sales delivery vans. By the mid-1920s there were several hundred horse-drawn and motor vans with a capacity from 7 cwt to 1 ton. They were stationed singly in a small town like Hitchin, or in pairs in a medium-sized town such as Peterborough, or in groups of ten to twenty in a big city like Birmingham.

The drivers of the sales vans were not only good salesmen but had to be taught to drive and to keep their accounts for paying cash into local banks. They were organised into groups under fourteen district supervisors. Among the hundreds of journeys made every year, some consisted of a few square miles in a city, while others might extend to several hundred square miles in a larger territory like Scotland; in 1954, 60,000 journeys were made. Every trip was planned to a strict timetable, not only for orderly management but to ensure that the shopkeeper would be in his shop, with cash available, and knowing when to expect the next delivery. Salesmen could replenish their stock at the various depots around the country or they could order from Greenford and collect the goods from a local railway station, or at some point on the trunk-road system.



When Walter Gaunt joined Lyons in 1919, the triangular estate at Greenford had just been bought. On one side was the Great Western Railway, on the other the Grand Union Canal and to the south Oldfield Lane, which connected to the arterial road systems that were being built westward from London. When Greenford became fully operational a more flexible means of transport was required and a 6-ton steam wagon (a Sentinel Waggon) was purchased to gauge its usefulness to the company. It must have proved its worth, because Lyons took delivery of twenty-seven Sentinel Waggon between 1919 and 1923, the first at a cost of £1,265.

Before the First World War, Lyons had experimented with a variety of small internal combustion vehicles



*pictures
courtesy
Peter Bird*

produced by Renault, Guy, Buick, Vulcan and Model-T Fords, as well as small battery vans made by GV and Edison. One of their first acquisitions was a Lacre, which was fired by low-tension igniters and driven by a chain transmission. It was used by a tea salesman who had answered an advertisement in 1908 for 'Pioneer Motor Salesmen'. By 1911 sixty small motor vans were in use, Renault being the salesmen's favourite.

The Road Traffic Acts of 1930 restricted the total gross weight for a four-wheeled vehicle to 12 tons, 19 tons for a six-wheeled vehicle and 22 tons for an eight-wheeler. The Act also limited steam wagons on solid tyres to a maximum of 16 miles per hour; this was increased to 20 miles per hour if the wagons were fitted with pneumatic tyres. These regulations had a disastrous effect on heavily constructed vehicles – such as steam Sentinels – because their maximum carrying capacity was greatly reduced. Some changes were made in the 1931 Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations to help makers of steam-driven transport to overcome these difficulties but the days of steam road vehicles were numbered.

Lyons' first vehicle workshop was set up at Cadby Hall in about 1905 to service the growing fleet of combustion-engine cars. This later moved to another Lyons location in the Hammersmith Road and from there to the Normand Garage repair shop in Fulham. In February 1921 this repair shop operation was transformed into a wholly owned subsidiary under the title Normand Garage Ltd, which soon afterwards acquired the specialist engineering company Hydraulic Gears Ltd. As Greenford began to play a more important part in the distribution network, Normand Garage Ltd moved to new premises at Cumberland Avenue, Park Royal (in 1925), where it could service both Cadby Hall and Greenford and where there was sufficient capacity to build more distribution vehicle bodies in-house.

By 1957 the Lyons transport fleet had grown to 2,750 vehicles of all shapes and sizes, from small 8-cwt runabouts to the big articulated lorries carrying 10-ton loads or 2,500 gallons of ice-cream, and 400 cars for commercial travellers and executives. Heavy steam transport had been replaced by diesel power, pioneered in the United Kingdom by ERF whose vehicles were legendary. Initially powered by a Gardner boat diesel, the engines were low-revving, reliable and able to haul huge loads over great distances. For the driver too they were easier to handle than steam wagons, although power steering had not yet been introduced and they required considerable strength when turning in small spaces.



The rapid pre-war growth of Lyons' bakery business had been largely due to the railway system of distribution when Lyons could guarantee delivery of goods, anywhere in the country, within twenty-four hours of order. After the war the railways slowly improved their services and on 1 January 1948 they were nationalised. In just two years the increase in rail freight charges, together with increases in petrol tax, had added well over £100,000 to the direct cost of distributing goods. Nevertheless over 26,000 orders per week continued to be dispatched by rail from Addison Road station, near Cadby Hall, right up to July 1954. However, distribution by rail became increasingly expensive, the railways became less reliable and many branch lines

began to be closed, preventing the delivery of goods to some of the more remote areas of the country. This process had started in June 1957 when British Railways reported a loss of £16.5 million; by May 1959 they had closed 230 stations. It culminated when the Conservative government in 1963 accepted a report by Dr Richard Beeching, Chairman of the British Railways Board, which advocated closing many rural and branch lines. The government then announced the closure of 280 passenger lines, 1,850 stations (26 per cent), hundreds of branch lines and uneconomic freight services. With the railways undergoing such an immense closure programme, Lyons were forced to develop an extensive alternative system of distribution by road which not only proved to be expensive but was not completed until 1965, by which time nearly 3,500 railway miles had been lost.

Lyons first had to establish regional depots from which local deliveries could be made, and the first phase had been to open depots at Chessington*, Hemel Hempstead, Hammersmith, Crawley and Romford. Provincial depots and sub-depots in large areas were added to complete the national network. Once all the road depots had been set up, only 1,000 orders were dispatched by rail, with the balance going from forty distribution centres. The depot network was supplied largely from the massive baking capacity at Cadby Hall by their 'trunker' lorries (a term denoting Lyons' large freight distribution vehicles).



When Lyons' main trading divisions decentralised in the 1960s, the responsibility for transport and their livery fell on the respective boards. A precedent for change had been set in the 1950s when the ice-cream department had adopted a predominantly white van with a wide band of grey and dark blue on the lower third. Otherwise the Lyons transport livery was based on the traditional combination of dark blue and grey with gold lettering – a design immediately recognised by many members of the public and almost as commonly seen as the red Post Office vans. However, the new management boards wanted to break away from tradition by creating individual identities for their own businesses, and leading this movement was the Bakery Division's marketing manager John Ramsden, who favoured a complete change of image for all bakery commercial vehicles. With trading sectors already responsible for their own transport fleets, there was a groundswell of opinion within the Bakery Division favouring change. However, any change would obviously be resisted by traditionalists. The issue was so important that all twenty-seven members of the Lyons board discussed it on 11 October 1962. Although there were many who were appalled at the idea of change, the principle of divisional autonomy was respected. It was therefore agreed that individual trading divisions would, if they felt the need, be allowed to design their own liveries; these started to appear in the mid-1960s. For the Bakery Division a white van with oatmeal-coloured lettering displaying an egg whisk and basin was adopted. When it appeared, most thought it was an uninspired, vulgar design concocted by the Lyons Bakery marketing department which did little for the image of Lyons or, for that matter, of Lyons Bakery.

* John Edser, in his time as a Lyons' Cakes Van-boy (1956-1960), had been based at Chessington.

For the next twenty years the process of autonomy continued and in the 1970s/1980s some trading companies off-loaded part, or all, of their distribution systems to the emerging 'Logistic' companies. By 1978 the Lyons business had been acquired by Allied Breweries Ltd who soon afterwards decided to refocus the business on Spirits and the Food Sector was sold piecemeal to other food related organisations. The Bakery business went to Manor Bakeries, Ice Cream to Clarke Foods and then Nestle. Part of the Coffee business went to Suchard and the Tea business to the Tata conglomerate of India. The Hotel Division had been sold to Forte one year before Allied Breweries Ltd made their bid for Lyons. Soon afterwards Allied-Lyons, as the new group had become known, acquired the Spanish sherry business of Domecq and the company's name changed again to Allied Domecq plc. The only parts of the Lyons food business still retained by Allied Domecq plc are Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream (America) and Dunkin' Donuts.

Peter Bird

Already we have some items arising from the Lyons' story:

Lyons' Ice Cream – 'by rail'



Our new member, David St John Thomas, had in chance conversation heard of the above article by Peter Bird. He told your Editor that, as a boy who was a railway enthusiast, he had always felt that he ought to favour Lyons Maid ice cream over Walls' or Eldorado, as Lyons' did much of their distribution by railway.

Then, years later, he happened to be talking to the Station Master at Hexham, when a Lyons' salesman drove up with a consignment of ice cream for a remote village. The railway had a duty as "a common carrier" to accept goods for carriage, on payment of a published rate for the service. The Lyons' representative paid the appropriate sum, and the Station Master despatched the ice cream 'by rail' to the village, which was unserved by rail. He had to hire a taxi to deliver it, at much greater cost, than the payment that British Railways received.

"Common carriers"

This tale, in turn, brings us to the railways' liability to provide a "common carrier" service. Firstly, Ian Yearsley opines that there must have been a listing in the railway rates for that particular village; one that, at some stage, the railways must have considered to be within the scope of their service.

Then, John Hibbs writes: The railway companies had been common carriers from the start, so it was assumed that the same thing applied to the Railway Executive under the Transport Act 1947, since no mention was made of it. Although it was rather a dead letter by then, Beeching insisted that the liability should go, and it was removed by the Transport Act of 1962.

Once again, your Editor turns to the *Companion to British Road Haulage History* – how immensely useful that volume is – and finds a reference, by Grahame Boyes, to the obligations placed on 'common carriers'. This concluded that, by the twentieth century, the difference between common carrier and private carrier – in transport by road – had diminished, "since it had long been the accepted practice for common carriers to limit their liability by applying conditions of carriage (q.v.). By the 1990s, legal opinion was that few, if any, carriers would now be regarded as common carriers. The law relating to common carriers is rarely invoked, although it is not obsolete".

Walter Henry Gaunt

Then, Peter Bird has asked whether anything is known of the earlier career of Walter Henry Gaunt? We are talking now of 90 to 100 years ago. Peter believes that Lyons engaged him because of his proven organisational ability, which he had demonstrated on electric tramways (in the Manchester area?). Possibly a very simple question; possibly not. Can readers help?

The Way Forward

(For background on the Silberman affair, please see Newsletter No.37 page 5)

The Silberman affair is settled. The Science Museum conceded that they had applied "rather a Roll-Royce approach" to it. The Museum's legal fees were reduced by one half, and the Association accepted that as a fair and reasonable settlement, and paid up.

The Association is left in a tolerably sound financial position. But this is only because the Editors of the *Companion to British Road Haulage History* made heavy contributions towards the costs, the Association's Officers also significantly contributed and, most welcome of all, there were hundreds of pounds contributed in donations large and small by our Associate Members.

The very firm aim is to avoid the Association getting into this sort of agony again. But this is a litigious age, and all members or representatives of corporate bodies should have received, at the beginning of August, a notice from our Honorary Secretary, Gordon Knowles, convening our scheduled Coventry Meeting on 11 September 2004 as an Extraordinary General Meeting. The proposal is that we should convert, from 1 January 2005, into a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). This is a step which constitutes an amendment to the Association's Constitution. It therefore requires the approval of two-thirds of paid-up members. The

votes of members who are not going to be at Coventry are needed in advance. Those who are at Coventry can vote in person on the day.

The Notice of the EGM puts forward three resolutions, with a strong recommendation from Committee that members should vote "Yes" to all three. Once the general principle has been established, there remain several points of detail about the construction of the CLG which are not "set in concrete" at this stage, but which will be debated, and hopefully decided upon, at Coventry.

However, it is vital to have a vote NOW on the general principle — from those who are not going to be at Coventry. If you have questions that you want to ask before you decide how to vote, four of your Officers offer (hopefully well-briefed) "helplines" for your calls over the next few days (you cannot leave it longer; you must get your vote in):

Roger Atkinson on 01244 – 351066

Gordon Knowles on 01372 – 458396

John Hibbs on 0121 – 382 - 5036

Garry Turvey on 01342 – 325829

If you have lost your EGM Notice = Voting Paper, please phone Roger Atkinson; he has some spares.



Letters to the Editor

NOT A NEW BOY!

Thanks for including my bus biography in *Newsletter 37*, but may I make one comment?

The item was included under the heading "Welcome to New Members". I have, of course, been a member of the R&RTHA since it was founded, first in the capacity of the PSV Circle representative and secondly as an individual member. Perhaps this could be made clear in the next *Newsletter*.

Maurice Doggett.

Editor's Note: Yes! Of course it can be made clear, and should be with profound apologies. One of the hazards of using a computer is the facile ability to use headings already held in the computer's memory, without adapting them to the new material. In this *Newsletter*, "Welcome to New Members" is used appropriately for two new members, Alan Shardlow in Scotland and David Stewart-David in Newcastle-upon-Tyne; but we meet our Minutes Secretary, Roger de Boer, a member of long standing, under the heading "Introducing our Members".

"THE CHAIRMAN'S BULLETIN" (January 2004)

You have asked for feedback. The content is good, interesting stuff and I enjoyed reading it. The circulation of the autobiographical pieces about individual and corporate associate members helps to bring us together into a coherent group.

Grahame Boyes

I was pleased to receive your "Chairman's Bulletin". I welcome it as it brings together other aspects and viewpoints that might not naturally fit into the *Newsletter*. In particular, I enjoyed the potted biographies of new members.

Eric Ogden

H.C. & Co. (*Newsletter 37*, p.10)

I expect that you have by now had an answer upon the identity of the printer H.C. & Co., but just in case This was H Clarke & Co (London) Ltd of 36-42 New Inn Yard, London EC2. They printed stationery for various bus companies. Timetable books of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd bore their imprint from 1942 to 1952. Iolo Watkin, who worked for Index Publishers for many years, told me that, owing to a big fire at Clarke's premises, these books were actually produced by Index. He believed that Harry Clarke and Cyril Tibbett (Managing Director of Index) were friends.

Derek Giles

Editor's Note: Index Publishers (Dunstable) Ltd – a name to revere in bus timetable printing. Printers to the London Passenger Transport Board, setting a standard that was both immediately recognisable and of the highest quality. There is a map of bus services, produced by Index Publishers for the People's Motor Services Ltd of Ware, on a later page of this *Newsletter*.

Symposium 2004

Along with the Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting (see "The Way Forward" – above), members should have received a notice, on green semi-stiff card, about this autumn's Symposium in Derby. If you have not had one, please phone Roger Atkinson on 01244 – 351066. (Also phone him if you are missing the vital EGM Notice = voting form).

The Symposium is on "Legislation and Road Transport in the 20th Century". Please do not be deterred by the title. Many interesting highways and byways of legislation are likely to crop up. Indeed, please support R&RTHA Symposia year by year; they do involve the (unremunerated) speakers in a good deal of work and preparation, and they are making the journey to Derby to speak to an assuredly intelligent, but also hopefully numerically worthwhile, audience and "numerically worthwhile" is the point being emphasised here. Please book for the Symposium on 30 October 2004.

If you have not been to one of our Symposia and would like to see examples of the interesting papers presented, turn to page 6 of *Newsletter No.37* for a résumé of the 2002 and 2003 events. The two booklets reproducing the talks are still available from David Harman, 24 Frankfield Rise, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5LE, at £4.00 for 2002 "Learning from History" and £2.50 for 2003 "A Medley of Thoughts" (both prices post-free).

John Hibbs points out that Kevin Hey's latest piece of published research is significant for the papers that both Kevin and John himself are working on for the Symposium. The work is "The Initial Crisis of Bus Licensing 1931-1934", and it is in *The Journal of Transport History*, Third Series, Volume 25, Number 1, March 2004, (published by the Manchester University Press).

In the afternoon session this year, one of the speakers is to be Sir Peter Baldwin KCB, on "What the Past tells us about Motorways in the Future". Our President, Garry Turvey CBE, poses a question which perhaps some member may be able to answer: In 1943, when one can say that the tide of war was beginning to turn, various eminent people began to think about Postwar Reconstruction. A paper "Britain's Need for Roads" was presented to the Liverpool Engineering Society that year by Boyd Bowman, MA (Cantab). Can any reader please give Garry some background on Boyd Bowman?



Included in Bowman's paper was a map for "1,000 Miles of Motorways" reproduced here. This map seems to have been, at that time, a well-known blueprint. According to Bowman, it had been produced by the County Surveyors' Society "just before the War". The map occurred again in a fascinating publication called "Road Transport – A Victory Review of Peacetime Problems", published in 1945 by Staples Press Ltd, London W1, price 2/6. This was a production edited by the late Charles F Klapper, which contained articles on all manner of road transport associated subjects, including one (unsigned) entitled "Motorways – What will be the road of the future?"

► NEWSLETTER No.36

Apologies; but in the end there were problems and No.36 never appeared. Members who keep their *Newsletters* in order should have :

No.35
Chairman's Bulletin
No.37
This issue, No.38

The 2004 subscription will cover Nos. 37 to 40 inclusive.

► FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

The target date for issue of No.39 has been put forward to 11 November.

Contributions by 9 October, please

Provisional target date for No. 40 is 13 January.

Contributions by 11 December.

Sources of Information

**British Motor Industry Heritage
Trust Archive Collection, Gaydon, Warwickshire
+ the Modern Records Centre,
University of Warwick Library**

To supplement the useful information given by Gillian Bardsley in the R&RTHA *Chairman's Bulletin*, January 2004, p.3, it is worth pointing out the existence of a deposit by the Trust of related business records of former British Leyland constituents which is held by the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick Library, Coventry CV4 7AL. The deposit (MSS.226) comprises formal business records such as minutes, accounts and annual reports of numerous BL constituents and, in the case of the Standard Motor Co, extensive subject files.

Further information will be found in the Centre's Sources Booklet No.6, "Automotive History Sources in Coventry Archives (1996)". www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/pubs/forsale/autopros/

*Christine Woodland, Archivist, Modern Records Centre;
Richard Storey, former Archivist*

University of Leicester's Historical Directories Project

In *Newsletter* 37 at page 10 there is a reference to University of Leicester's Historical Directories Project in which it is said "there are, so far, only six directories for Wales". There is now, however, a CD produced by the Friends of Wrexham Museums and the Clwyd Family History Society on which are reproduced 25 directories, most of them covering the whole of North Wales. Seven of them also cover the city of Chester. It is easy to navigate, with an index providing access to the details of each place, and the text can be enlarged and printed out.

I obtained mine from Miss Joy Thomas, 2 Ffordd Cynan, Wrexham LL12 7SS, in return for a cheque for £20.95 payable to Clwyd FHS.

Ken Swallow

County and local periodicals

The contributors of the foregoing pieces have offered clear definitions of material available and of how to access it; that is just what the Editor appreciates. This contribution is, by contrast, a nightmare. It directs readers attention in a vague way towards ill-defined publications. Nonetheless, two such publications have proved to be pertinent, worthwhile sources in connection with items elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, and a separate, up to date example is cited below. These sources are county or local-interest magazines. A few may be consistently good on historical information on the broad fields that the R&RTHA embraces; others seem to be good at times, but then have long, fallow periods. The difficulty is to make any specific recommendations beyond urging readers not to overlook them. Browse sometimes in libraries that have long runs of back numbers. If you find material of interest, let *Newsletter* know.

The two publications drawn upon in this *Newsletter* were the *Bedfordshire Magazine* and *Hertfordshire Past & Present*.

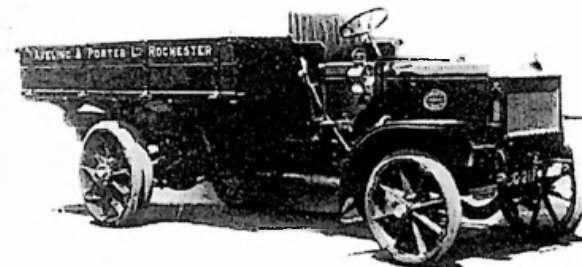
Bygone Kent

Published by Hamish and Barbara Mackay Miller, Meresborough Books, 17 Station Road, Rainham, Kent, ME8 7RS. £26 for 12 copies

Bygone Kent is a monthly magazine which covers all aspects of local history in the county. The contents of the July 2004 edition are a typical mix – WW1 experiences from Rainham teachers, the Stoke U-boat, Upchurch Village Carnival,

Faversham houses, etc. Authors include historians, professional and amateur, and 'ordinary people' reminiscing. The style is informal and the content aimed perhaps at the general reader rather than the ultra-serious historical researcher. Nonetheless, there are valuable pointers to local sources of historical information for the serious researcher.

Transport topics are regularly covered. Recent ones have included Bus stations in Kent, the Margate station bus and the Downe Village omnibus. Freight transport is not overlooked. In the current issue, Jim Preston writes on Aveling Lorries and this provides a suitable taster of "Bygone Kent". Aveling & Porter Ltd. of Strood, were better known for their steam traction engines and road rollers, but they also produced lorries. Customers included Spillers (for flat-beds) Lyons Tea, Pickfords, and Thomas Tilling (box-vans). Their first petrol model appeared in 1914, but only a total of 23 were ever built. In 1929, they designed and built a diesel-engined lorry but before this could be developed further, financial difficulties intervened and the firm went into liquidation.



3-4 ton petrol engine lorry probably built in 1915.

"Bygone Kent" issues back to no.1 (1980) can still be obtained from the publisher; most of the larger libraries in Kent stock current and some past issues; there is an online subject/title index at www.bygonekent.co.uk/.

David Harman

The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB) is briefly mentioned later in "Meandering through Three Counties" (pages 12 to 14). Courtesy of the publishers, a brochure for this important work is enclosed with this *Newsletter*. The Dictionary is to be published in both physical and virtual versions, on 23 September.

The website (www.oup.com/oxforddnb/) contains an extensive section on "Making the Dictionary". Under "Business and the world of labour", it has this to say ...

... The old Dictionary of National Biography highlighted the big nineteenth-century figures in shipping and railways, but our coverage of transport subjects probes more deeply into canals and road transport, including turnpike promoters, mail-coach proprietors and horse-drawn road hauliers. We do fuller justice to the major early-twentieth-century personalities associated with the advent of the bus, the tram and the underground railway ...

At least three members of the R&RTHA have contributed pieces on figures of transport significance for inclusion in the new Dictionary. These are Professor John Armstrong, Professor John Hibbs and Richard Storey.

David Harman

Welcome to New Members

ALAN SHARDLOW of Collace, Perthshire

The sheer pleasure of that summer day in 1964 when I made the breakthrough in deciphering Central SMT's numbering system remains a vivid memory. Who else, I wondered, had been smart enough to realise that B stood for Bristol and L for Leyland? But I wasn't that clever; an explanation for the HLs and the BEs eluded me. Soon afterwards, a family holiday in North Wales opened the door on the world of Crosville Motor Services and what to this day I regard as the quintessential numbering system. (What a bewildering array they had for Bristol Lodekkas, while Central managed with only three). Those were the days when almost anything that had wheels and displayed a number qualified for an entry into my notebook – even the local council's dustcarts and road sweepers. Noting that the newest Shelvoke & Drewry Revopaks, equipped with the latest compaction technology, inherited the fleet numbers of the ageing Fore and Aft Tippers that they replaced, I began to appreciate that there was more than one way to number a commercial vehicle fleet. So started a life-long passion about numbers and codes, an interest that probably influenced my professional life and over the years expanded into a study of railways, buses and, ultimately, road haulage history.

Of course, my "discovery" of Central's numbering system was quickly followed by my "discovery" of Ian Allan's British Bus Fleets booklets, "Buses Illustrated" magazine, the PSV Circle and the Omnibus Society. Whilst buses continued to hold my interest for many years, the movement of freight provided the stronger attraction. The absence of anything comparable to what was published for other forms of transport made the study of lorries and haulage firms more challenging, though the satisfaction of finding out things for yourself had to be offset by the frustration of rarely succeeding in building up a great portrait of any company. Without access to ready-made fleet lists and regular updates, personal observation was the sole source of information until membership of the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club put me in touch with other enthusiasts (to whom I am indebted for my first insights into how my favourite companies evolved).

Still driven by a fascination with numbers, my interest widened to include an understanding of the business and organisational changes underpinning those numbering patterns. Smith of Maddiston was a classic example. The puzzling difference between the apparent randomness of the fleet numbers carried by pre-1966 vehicles and orderly chronological sequence imposed on later vehicles, was resolved upon learning that Smith of Maddiston Ltd had been created in May 1966 to consolidate five separate companies into one business. Another prominent episode occurred in the 1970s when the National Freight Corporation* rationalised its operations north of the border. As the Tayforth organisation* and Scottish Road Services were dismantled, entire fleets were renumbered, sometimes more than once. Of the vehicles that started in 1977 in McKinnon's livery, most gave service through to the autumn of 1978 bearing three different fleet numbers.

It was perhaps good fortune that by the time that the state had disposed of its haulage undertakings, and the Transport Development Group* had started to abandon its individual identities, and, furthermore, innumerable smaller businesses had vanished along with Scotland's traditional industries, my transport pursuits had entered an eight-year hiatus ushered in by the imperatives of nappies, DIY and gardening. By the mid-nineties, free time was again available, and with it the motivation to explore the histories of the companies whose numbers I had avidly collected (and several whose existence

only came to light during my investigations).

- * Alan Shardlow touches on a very complex period in the 1970s. There are significant entries in the *Companion to British Road Haulage History* on the National Freight Corporation, Tayforth Ltd (with mention of its subsidiary D McKinnon [Transport] Ltd) and the Transport Development Group. Ed.

DAVID STEWART-DAVID of Heaton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

A problem associated with reaching bus pass years is pernicious nostalgia. Its symptoms are a general belief that "things were better when I was a lad" and an indifference to the future. This new member is wary of the problem that "old men remember with advantages" but has had the experience, common to many, of being in a committee where someone has suggested a brilliant innovation that was tried in 1965, and abandoned with regret a year or two later. This is not to say that the idea is doomed to collapse again, so long as one learns the reasons for previous failure. Learning from history seems a constructive contribution to modern management, and that's one reason why I joined R&RTHA.

This is no place for a biography, but in past periods of my life I lived in Heysham, Kingston on Thames, Cottingham, South Shields and other places before my present dwelling place in Heaton, close to the Coast Road from Newcastle to Tynemouth. These quirks of geography are leading me to write a paper which I have for the moment titled "Willebrews and Revenues", which I hope to deliver to the R and RTHA in due course. As a five year old I discovered that I went to school or the shops on a green bus with brown seats, but when we went to the Royal Infirmary at Lancaster the vehicle was maroon. It could be an LMS electric train from Heysham Harbour Station, or a Ribble bus from Heysham Towers. Why did the Ribble bus have "chopper" tickets, bench seats, and a triangular destination screen? Why didn't the green buses go to Lancaster? I moved from Heysham when I was eight, and these innocent questions might have been completely forgotten had I not gone to Hull University. There I found that the blue and white Corporation buses (AEC Regents like those of Morecambe and Heysham) went to the city boundary, but Cottingham, in Haltemprice, was served by dark blue company buses - in those days Leyland Titans and Guy Arabs with Gothic roof profiles. And when, one wet morning, I chose the bus instead of my bike, I found that the East Yorkshire conductor issued me with a "chopper" ticket from a Willebrew machine just like the one on the Ribble bus of my childhood. Then I discovered the politics and economics of corporation versus company, of joint services to overspill estates, and complicated revenue sharing on the Beverley Road. Soon I had a girl friend who lived at Willthorpe, just inside the county borough boundary of Barnsley, and there I found that Yorkshire Traction and County Motors buses would set you down at the stop, but the stropky conductors on the Yorkshire Woollen District vehicles would often ring three bells and take you to the first stop in the fields, and tell you not to get on their bus again.

I imagine that the R&RTHA will be full of people who know about established operators, bus routes that followed tram networks, and the contrast in employment patterns between corporation and company crews (often like the contrast between own account drivers and hire and reward drivers in the road freight business). So I am hoping that members will be able to tell me facts, and lend me maps, and even Willebrew tickets, so that I can write about the what and why and when and when and how and where and who of buses that shared

the road but not the termini. I'll seek to answer the question "why" with answers like "because the trams went there" and "they didn't call it market segmentation, but that's what it was", so these ideas will make a paper. But there's also the visual imagery, so I hope to produce a slide show of elegant green Regents, "6d minimum fare", Beverley Bar Guy Arabs and "set down only" signs, to capture the visual interest of

divided markets. A thing of the past? So why today does the 38 turn left off the coast road the way the trolleybuses did, whilst the 308 sails on into North Tyneside? And why is the 38 run by Stagecoach, whilst the 308 is shared by Arriva and Go Ahead? Past history shapes present practice, sometimes with good reason, and sometimes showing a quirk of long gone habitude.

Introducing our Members

Roger F de Boer of Northfield, Birmingham
(our Minutes Secretary)

By living on a main road since babyhood in 1948, it was a natural progression that an interest in transport should be taken. On return from the Netherlands in December 1947, the 20-month-old baby uttered the expletive "Mooie auto (nice car)" at everything that passed by him at Brum's Victoria Square.

The privilege of being able to afford to travel to the Netherlands annually from the late 1940s embraced the continental bus – in the form of the Dutch Crossleys with the "scrubberboard" grilles – whilst at home, the Midland Red single-deckers at Worcester (his mother's birthplace) brought in a parallel admiration for the British motor bus.

At four years old (1950), the theft of two toy coaches from his pushchair confirmed his interest in the bus. But only two years later, the milk float would be encountered during a visit to Northfield by his Dutch grandparents. Here also, there was a twin experience: the receipt of a Dinky Toy NCB milk float as compensation for the breaking of a plastic aeroplane, and the photographing of the child, between his grandparents with a real milk float in the background, became the launch of an interest in battery electric vehicles also.

Never a driver, but a rider of pedal cycles from 1952 and motor cycles between 1969 and 2003, he was to enter the world of bus preservation in 1969 as a founder member of the 2489 Crossley Bus Group, but withdrew from this pursuit in 1988.

From 1960, he made his own fleet lists of local bus operators not covered in the Ian Allan ABCs, and when interest moved to Scammell MHs and electric vehicles in the 1970, the listing continued.

A compulsive writer, he was invited to work on a book recording the history of "Birmingham's Electric Dustcarts" in 1982 by the Saltley Vehicle Society, of which he had been a member since 1973. Other Societies with which he was heavily involved were the Coventry Die Cast Model Club and the Model Bus Federation and the Mechanical Horse Club.

He commenced writing poetry in the 1960s, some of which is inevitably transport related. Publication of the dustcart book was not effected until 1990.

On leaving school in 1965, he joined the Civil Service, where he remains to date. He rejected promotion in order to concentrate on his transport hobby. He has never moved house; as an only child, he inherited his home on his mother's death in 1998, and as a bachelor he has time to devote to his writing. He hopes to republish his "Friesian Island Ameland Independent Bus Operators" shortly. Other projects will concern Malta, which he has visited 23 times since 1977, cycling and "The Three of Us" (two biographies – his parents – and an autobiography).

A few years ago he learned of the R&RTHC (as the R&RTHA then was) through the Council Vehicle Society, and joined it. He volunteered as Membership Secretary in 2002.

Like other members of the R&RTHA, Roger de Boer is also a member of other societies and has links with several transport museums, including the Northerly Bus Museum of Windschoten in the Netherlands. His aim is to encourage interest in transport history by donating material to relevant bodies through the making of a Will and the disposal of items during his lifetime.

Remember ...



REMEMBER.

The reputation and prosperity of the service depend, in a great measure, on the promptness with which its business is conducted, and the manner in which the General Public is treated by its Employers.

RONALD A. FEARNLEY, A.M.I.A.E.
Engineer & General Manager.

Head Office,
95 London Road,
Southend-on-Sea.

"Mission statements" are nothing new, although the term was probably unknown in 1931, when the Southend-on-Sea Corporation Light Railways & Transport Department issued their *Regulations and Working Instructions for Drivers and Conductors (Buses)*. This is the title page. Alter the phraseology slightly and is this any less appropriate for a passenger transport business today?

Some items within *do date*, though: "... when the Driver leaves the bus ... (he must) place a chock under the nearside rear wheel". "When on duty ... partaking of meals ... smoking ... frequenting of Drinking Houses (even when off-duty) ... betting, lending or borrowing money from fellow employees ..." were all frowned upon in varying degrees, up to and including dismissal. "In passing Places of Worship on the Sabbath, the use of the horn is to be restricted ... and the bus is to run quietly ..."

Ronald A. Fearnley (perhaps a candidate for People to Remember - see page 11) was Engineer and General Manager at Southend from 1929 until 1933, when he left for a long spell as General Manager at Coventry City Transport. He was there in the period examined by Lesley Whitworth in "Accounting for the Customers? A Tale of Public Transport in 1930s Coventry", in *Suburbanizing the Masses*, reviewed in Newsletter No.37.

David Harman

Short Bros. of Rochester Aluminium Bodies

During the depression years in the nineteen twenties and thirties Short Brothers looked to other ways of using their pioneering skills in fabricating aircraft fuselages in aluminium, the aircraft manufacturing industry had been in the doldrums ever since the end of World War I. They manufactured seaplane floats for other aircraft manufacturers, especially for Gloster and Supermarine, including those for the successful Schneider Trophy seaplanes, they also built boats, Medway barges and bus bodies.

I already knew of the 1927 Dennis with an aluminium body by Shorts, formerly owned by Southdown Motor Services, which has been restored by, and is currently displayed at the Amberley Museum in Sussex. Whilst researching in the archives at the Rochester upon Medway Studies Centre, based in the former Invicta steamroller factory which is now part of the local government offices, I came across details of buses supplied to the Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. fitted with aluminium bodies by Short Brothers.

I was primarily interested at the time in aircraft manufacturing information, unfortunately there is not a lot of

archive material remaining in Rochester, many records were transferred to Belfast in 1946 when the business was effectively nationalised and forcibly moved. I assume the records are still in Belfast and hope that they were not wantonly disposed of.

The full list of the Maidstone & District aluminium-bodies buses is as follows. The records include some photographs.

There was a steady production run from 1925 to 1929, then a gap until 1935 when the final deliveries were made. Why a six-year gap and why a resurgence on a different chassis maker, and why only a single batch on Guy chassis in 1926?

By the mid-1930s, the aircraft business was picking up for Shorts; this was the time they introduced the Empire flying boats, which were ordered in quantity straight off the drawing board by Imperial Airways. The military development, the Sunderland, was put in hand shortly afterwards, thus bus bodies were no longer needed to bolster up the business.

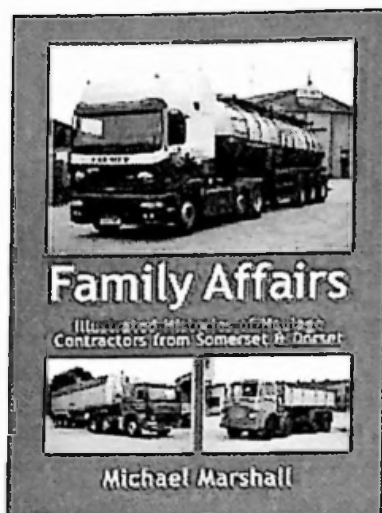
Gordon Knowles

1925	KL7791-7796	Tilling Stevens TS6	Shorts ref:	051RO
1925	KL9001-9006	Tilling Stevens TS6		051RO
1926	KM2122-2123	Tilling Stevens TS6		051RO
1926	KM2128-2129	Tilling Stevens TS6		051RO
1926	KM2132-2134	Tilling Stevens TS6		051RO
1926	KM3876-3881	Guy 30 cwt		B14F
1926	KM3864	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1926	KM3866-3867	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1926	KM3869-3870	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO110	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO112	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO116	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO118	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO120-123	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO125	Tilling Stevens B9A		B31R
1927	KO01-03	Dennis 30 cwt		B18F
1927	KO005-06	Dennis 30 cwt		B18F
1927	KO4081-4086	Dennis 30 cwt		B18F
1928	KO7323-7337	Leyland Lion PLSC3		B31R
1928	KO7338-7356	Leyland TD1		024/24RO
1928	KO7301-7322	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B26R
1928	KP3017	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B31R
1928	KP3023	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B31R
1928	KP3029	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B31R
1928	KP3035-3042	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B31R
1928	KP3064	Tilling-Stevens B9A		B31R
1929	KP3035-3068	Leyland TD1		024/24RO
1929	KP3043-3050	Tilling-Stevens B10A2		B31R
1935	CKE401-412	Leyland TD4		H24/24R †
1935	CKE440	AEC Regent		H24/24R
1935	CKE442	AEC Regent		H24/24R
1935	CKE446	AEC Regent		H24/24R
1935	CKE449-452	AEC Regent		H24/24R

* These KP numbers, in 1928 and 1929, are as recorded in the bundles of records seen; their inconsistencies are unexplained.

† One of these Leyland TD4s was sold to the Chatham & District Traction Company in June 1935, where it was given the fleet number 177. It was sold back to Maidstone & District in July 1942.

Book Review



Family Affairs: Illustrated Histories of Haulage Contractors from Somerset & Dorset, by Michael Marshall, Roundoak Publishing, ISBN 1 871565 43X, £24.95

Family Affairs was brought to our attention by our corporate member, the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club, in the July 2004 issue of their CVRTC NEWS. With the prompt collaboration of the Distributor, Nynehead Books, a review copy was in the hands of our Andover-based reviewer, Andrew Waller, in time to catch this issue of Newsletter. The book is available from Nynehead Books, The Old Dairy, Perry Farm, East Nynehead, Wellington, Somerset TA21 0DA. Tel: 01823 461 997; e-mail: info@nynehead-books.co.uk. Please add £2-50 for p&rp.

Incidentally, The First Food Empire by Peter Bird, (the history of J Lyons & Co mentioned on an early page of this Newsletter), and The Companion to British Road Haulage History are also available from Nynehead Books.

Michael Marshall tells the stories of a dozen family haulage firms in part of the West Country where farming has always predominated, but where local industry often provided a substantial share of their business. Some of them diversified into quarrying or supplying farms with feed for their animals, often as a strategy to stay in existence when the Labour government nationalised road haulage in 1949.

This is not just a history of special interest to lorry enthusiasts. *Family Affairs* sets the haulage business in the social, economic and political context of the 20th century. Young men who had learned to drive during World War I set themselves up as hauliers in the 1920s. Some were the youngest sons of farming families who had little prospect of making a living on the land.

By World War II their companies had prospered and grown. For the duration of hostilities they came under the control of the Ministry of War Transport. Often they carried dangerous cargoes of bombs from makeshift woodland arsenals in the West Country to supply depots in the north. They ferried heavy equipment for building airfields across the country, and delivered invasion barges and jeeps in CKD kit form to military units. At least one of the firms had a contract to carry Italian prisoners of war to work outside their camp.

As peace settled on the country, the new Labour government set about nationalising a number of industries. British Road Services was created in 1948/9, absorbing the fleets of hauliers. For two of the family concerns in this book, the story ended there. Others kept going by building up other sides of their businesses. The brothers W & E Evemy, of Frome, were a typical example. Bill Evemy had joined BRS and rose to be Deputy Commissioner of the Western Traffic Area, but he left in 1953 to link up with his brother Ted once more to build up the nearby Asham Quarry Co Ltd. It was soon supplying 1,000 tons of roadstone a day to county councils across the south.

With denationalisation, under the Conservatives in the early 1950s, came the opportunity, readily seized by keen entrepreneurs, to buy their way back into the business they had started back in the 1920s. But, being family concerns, they depended on members of the family wanting to carry on the firm as the founders' generation, or their sons and daughters, died out. Only three of them were still in business this year.

Michael Marshall has assembled an admirable body of research on the dozen family concerns he selected. Three quarters of the 196-page book are devoted to the histories of each firm. They are copiously illustrated with everything from Sentinel steam wagons, via AECs, Leylands and Bedfords from the 1930s, to modern Swedish-built trucks.

At the back of the book there are 16 pages of colour photographs. Inevitably most of them show fairly modern vehicles, but there is a magnificent 1931 Foden steam wagon that belonged to Perry & Perry of Beaminster, and a 1936 AEC Mammoth.

The last 24 pages provide a detailed list of each company's fleet. For some, these include a handful of early charabancs, which for example Bird Brothers, Yeovil, operated early on before deciding to concentrate on haulage. Indeed, nationalisation of his haulage activities prompted James Henry Clapcott, Parkstone, to try his hand at coaching in the early 1950s.

Nine of the 12 family firms began in the decade after World War I, but the longest-lived of them all, F Read & Sons, of Frome, began in 1910 with an Allchin steam wagon, and is still in business 94 years later. Hine Brothers of Gillingham, Dorset, bought their first vehicle, a five-ton Burrell tractor, in 1915. These firms worked for the army during both World Wars. Between the two conflicts Hines' business included everything from bacon to furniture, grain to roadstone.

Just one concern, DW Taylor & Sons of Pimperne, near Blandford, began after World War II. Today, as Taymix Transport Ltd, the firm has two main divisions each with an all-articulated fleet and each run by a family member. One handles 9,000 loads a year of by-products and general haulage, and the other 4,250 loads of food products.

This is obviously a book for road haulage enthusiasts, but it also has much to tell social and economic historians and anyone interested in how the face of rural England changed over the 20th century.

Andrew Waller

Any Ware to Anywhere

This was a popular punning slogan of road hauliers between the wars, so it is pleasing to see a new variant of it being used by DHL, the international air freight and logistics organisation,¹ in its current advertising (May 2004): 'Garments to Ware. Don't just think of DHL for international documents'

The Ware in question would be the Hertfordshire town some twenty miles north of London, on the crossing point of the River Lee Navigation and what used to be the A10 London to Cambridge road, which now bypasses the town.² Ware was nationally important as a malting centre in the nineteenth century: barley came by road, local brickworks were able to provide the building materials for capacious maltings and the finished product, malt, could be transported to London breweries by barge. Brick making and malting were alternating seasonal occupations, so bricks could be carried by

barge to the capital, with return loads including coal and further supplies of malting barley. The town supported a number of barge owners and operators, amongst which were: C Albany & Sons. They were acquired by Thames Steam Tug & Lighterage Co in 1932, and thence by the Transport Development Group in 1961.³ In the early 1950s, Albany operated a small fleet of Dennis tilt lorries, in a traditional livery of dark green with red wheels.

Richard Storey

- 1 *Companion to British Road Haulage History* p.127 re DHL Worldwide Express
- 2 *Ibid.* pp.405-407 re Transport Development Group
- 3 Richard Storey, 'Some Aspects of Transport in Ware' *Hertfordshire Past and Present* 10 (1970) pp.42-48

Post-War Reconstruction



© John W Smith

The media occasionally remind us these days of problems in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq. But our member, **John W Smith** of *Buses Worldwide* has awakened some interesting memories of the massive post-war reconstruction in continental Europe, with this photograph of a bus sent out from Britain as economic aid to Belgium after the war. It retains its British near-side entrance and right-hand drive, but had a home-made door on the Belgian nearside. He took the

picture at Oostende railway station on a snowy day in January 1956, when the vehicle was still in service.

This, in turn, stirred dim memories of two Bradford Corporation open-staircase double-deckers, acknowledged antiques, which had been used only on peak-hour extra duties in Bradford during the War. *Modern Transport* c.1945, had reported them passing to Sabena, the Belgian national airline.

Geoff Morant stepped in at this point, reminding your Editor that in a very early issue of *Buses Illustrated*, when the late Charles S Dunbar was editing that magazine, these buses had been referred to. It was in issue No.7 at page 228. The Revd. D Ridley Chesterton, a bus enthusiast, bus ticket collector and, most relevant of all, a missionary in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), reported that one of them had turned up, in dilapidated condition, in Leopoldville, (now Kinshasa), where he had seen it in March 1950.

Charles Dunbar appended a note: "This news is of particular interest to the Editor, as in 1945, when Belgium was in desperate need of buses, he was responsible for putting Sabena into touch with Bradford Corporation, which sold the air company two of its buses".

People to Remember

The late John Dunabin, a long-term R&RTHA member (and even longer-term Omnibus Society member) had two fields in which he was keen to advocate or help research – (a) the social impact of bus services; (b) persons who developed transport. Readers can look forward to an important article, by David St John Thomas, in *Newsletter* No.39 on the wide social impact of transport. But in this present *Newsletter*, readers are already being asked to turn their attention to people who developed transport. There are invitations, on different pages, to contribute background – facts, anecdotes or observations – on two individuals who made some mark, in widely different ways: Walter Henry Gaunt and Boyd Bowman.

There are many, many others – not quite important enough to have attained the status of entries in the *Dictionary of Business Biography*, the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* or the *Companion to British Road Haulage History*, who deserve to be put on record. Some may already be under consideration for the "in

progress" *Companion to British Road Passenger Transport History*, — *Newsletter* will be seeking to maintain collaboration, not conflict with that work – but one or two names are thrown out below, almost at random, with a request for readers to send in anything that they know about these people. Basic facts, dates of birth and death, obituaries (with details of where published), snippets of information (preferably giving a source): Alderman A H Gledhill, Henry Mozley, Walter Rathbone Bacon, F T Wood, Lieut.-Cmdr. F T Hare, R N (re'd), O C Power and C Owen Silvers.

The R&RTHA Symposium this October on "Legislation and Road Transport in the 20th Century" will bring up more names. But this still leaves readers ample scope not only for suggesting others, but also for pointing out, to your Editor, and through *Newsletter* to other readers, that there are existing articles on some of their lives.

Ed.RA

Meandering thro' Three Counties

Once upon a time – or I can be more precise; it was in the summer of 1945, the war with Germany just ended, but that with Japan having no end in sight – I arrived, by bicycle, in the Market Square in Potton. I made some innocuous enquiry of Mr Bartle – I probably asked him for a timetable. He threatened to set his dog on me. I made my departure; but when I got home, I wrote to him. I have no copy of what I wrote, but his reply is reproduced and set out below.

O.A. BARTLE & CO.
Market Square, Potton, Beds.

Mr R Atkinson,
Arundale, Barrington Road,
Letchworth, Herts. June 15th/45

Dear Sir, Many thanks for your kind interest and please find enclosed something for your perusal. I am so very busy and so short of Labour only 4 drivers where we had 8 in Peace Time & we get occasional ones sometimes also my Daughter drives a coach and I have to do continual driving do you know of a P.S.V. Driver of good character only.

Thanking you, I am faithfully,
O A Bartle

Not only did he send me that courteous, and historically informative, reply, but he also included, from an old timetable book, a photograph of himself in his study in Wisteria House, a dominating building in the Market Square. Rather grainy – but this was wartime, and almost any photograph was to be treasured. No photograph of one of his buses; but I had not asked for one. I had the privilege of a photograph of Omar Bartle himself. I feel privileged to this day.

I have said that I had no record of what I wrote, but I think that I may have commented on one, or perhaps some, of his buses having been bodied by W L Thurgood of Ware. My recollection is that the "something for your perusal" had to do with Thurgood of Ware. Teenagers do not hoard everything; I feel thankful for what I did keep; regretful for what I did not.

Anyway, let us now meander from Potton, down into Biggleswade, a town served by Omar Bartle's buses. My slipshod research has not extended to discovering when the main A1 road by-passed Biggleswade, but it must have been more than forty years ago. The *Bedfordshire Magazine*,

TELEPHONE: 216

O. A. BARTLE & CO.,
(BARTLE'S COACHES)

Garage Proprietors, Operators of Stage Services and Private Contracts

Market Square, Potton, Beds.

Mr R. Atkinson

June 15/45

Arundale

Barrington Road

Letchworth Herts

Dear Many thanks for your kind interest and please find enclosed something for your perusal I am so very busy & so short of Labour only 4 Drivers where we had 8 in Peace Time & we get occasional ones sometimes also my Daughter drives a Coach and I have to do continual driving do you know of a P.S.V. Driver of good Character only, Thanking you
I am faithfully,
O A Bartle



MR. OMAR BARTLE



The former A1 at Biggleswade [Bedfordshire Magazine]

(cited elsewhere in this Newsletter as a particularly good local publication), carried this picture of "The former A1 at Biggleswade" in its Summer 1963 issue. Observe, with wonderment nowadays, the absence of road markings or road signs, and that there were no cracked paving stones.

May we trot on, still in Bedfordshire, but heading south towards Hertfordshire? We pause at the gates of Three Counties, an eminent Victorian lunatic asylum near Stotfold, that has so aptly lent its name to these notes. An article in *Tramway Review* (Issues 168, Winter 1996 and 169, Spring 1997), tells us that it was one of the first establishments to be set up under the Lunatic Asylums Act of 1853, and construction was commenced in 1857. A "tramway" was built; it would seem initially to convey building materials. It ran from near Arlesey Siding Station, on the Great Northern main line, to the hospital site. The tramway continued to operate "into the 1930s" and may only have closed as late as 1952. Information seems to be scanty, with a suggestion – but not apparent certainty – that the line was horse worked.

In the late 1990s, an establishment on the site was known as Fairfield Hospital. Disgracefully, I have not researched its function at that date, nor even whether it still survives in 2004. Harking back to 1945, when I cycled past it, one can say that London Transport, in the forefront of political correctness, would probably, even as early as that, have been referring to it as a Mental Hospital, or have abbreviated it to "Three Counties MH Main Gates" on its fare tables, had its buses served it. But Three Counties was out in the sticks, in Eastern National territory. Eastern National's Midland Section passed to the United Counties Omnibus Co Ltd in 1952 (p.10, *Newsletter No.37*). Little difference did that make; even as late as 1959, United Counties had a fare stage in its printed fare table for Route 52B Luton – Hitchin – Letchworth – Norton – Stotfold: "Stotfold Fruit Farm or Asylum".

In Hertfordshire, we are going to shoot straight across to Ware, in pursuit of W L Thurgood. (Whoa! Haven't we already been to Ware in this Newsletter? Yes, we have; under 'Any Ware to Anywhere'. But with our own member, Richard Storey, an authority on the town, it is well worth a second visit). Richard has told me:

Walter Leonard Thurgood (1903-1973) was the subject of a

quite extensive entry in Volume 5 of the *Dictionary of Business Biography (DBB)*, published by Butterworths, 1984-1986.

Moreover, there is expected to be an entry on Thurgood in the new 60-volume *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*, due to be published in September 2004. In the DBB, the brief caption to Thurgood is "Coachbuilder and air transport pioneer" which offers a foretaste of this brief résumé. He founded his coachworks in former malting premises in Ware in 1925. His customers came especially, though not exclusively, from the Home Counties. Omar Bartle of Potton was among them and, (relying on Roger Warwick's *History of the United Counties Omnibus Co Ltd*, Vol.7 pp19-21), when Bartle sold out in 1953, half of his vehicles at that time had Thurgood bodies. The ex-Bartle vehicles that United Counties did

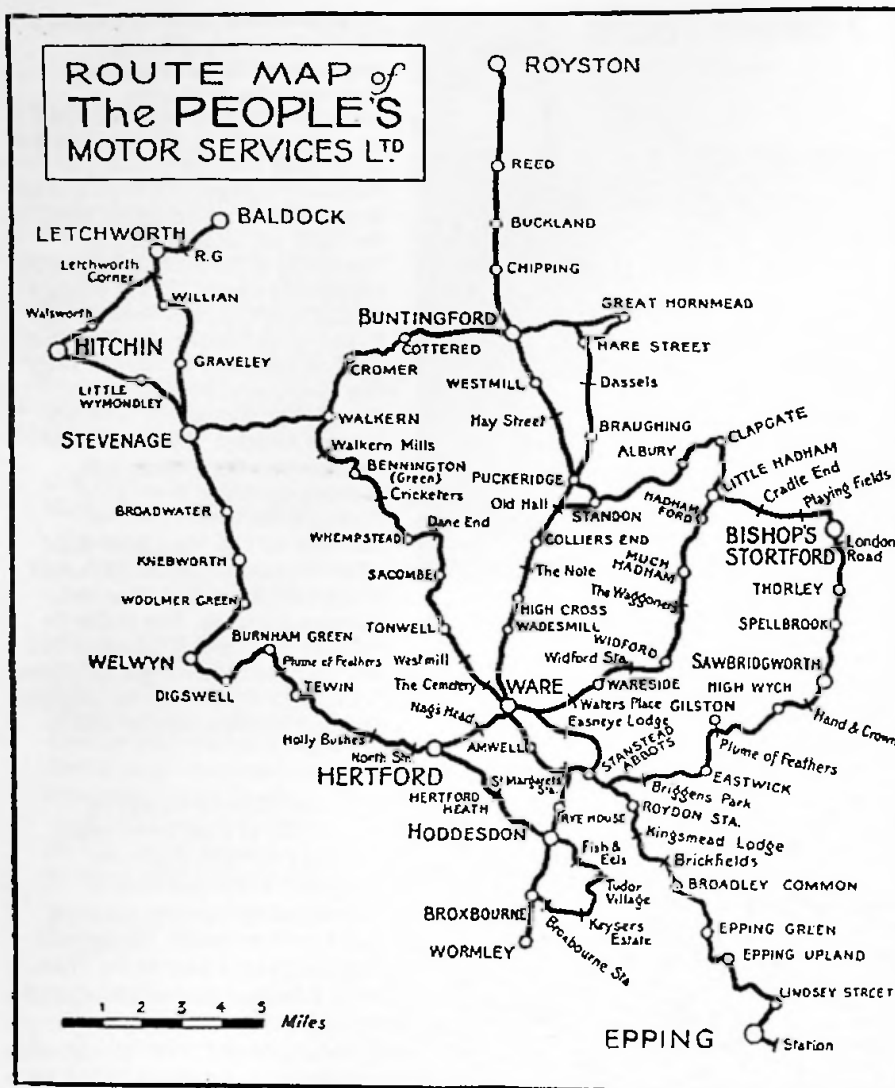
not make use of were, in fact, disposed of through Thurgood, in his role as a dealer. (Richard has a record that he actually saw some ex-Bartle Duple-bodied Bedford OBs for sale in Thurgood's yard in October 1953).

In 1928 the People's Motor Services Ltd was started by Thurgood and developed extensively in a very few years. After the sale of the People's Motor Services Ltd to the London Passenger Transport Board in November 1933, Thurgood participated in the formation of Jersey Airways Ltd, flying from St Helier beach to Portsmouth. Thurgood's direct involvement in air transport ceased later in the 1930s, coachbuilding remaining as his principal interest and source of income, apart from venturing into the manufacture of decorated, laminated plastic sheets, named 'Wareite'. During the war, the coachbuilding works were destroyed by enemy action, but were rebuilt within a few months. Finally, in mid-1967, the business was sold to Plaxtons (Scarborough) Ltd.

Turning now to the *Omnibus Magazine*, the periodical of our corporate member, the Omnibus Society, there was a nice map by Index Publishers (see a Letter to the Editor on an earlier page), for the People's Motor Services Ltd, and it is reproduced overleaf. It was in the March 1934 *Omnibus Magazine*. It will be seen that whilst the People's services were principally in Hertfordshire, there was one route that ran down into Essex, to Epping via Roydon.

Drawing now on the expertise of another of our corporate members, the Transport Ticket Society, there was reference in *Transport Ticket Society Journal* in 1964, to the survival into the 1960s of Weekly tickets on London Transport Country Buses in the Northern Area. It was commented that these were closely derived from precedents set, more than thirty years earlier, by the National Omnibus & Transport Co Ltd and The People's Motor Services Ltd. For example, there were no Weekly Ticket facilities in Harlow New Town at all. This was quite rational to London Transport's way of reasoning. Harlow New Town had simply not existed in the time of the National and People's companies; and had thus not been served by them, so it could not have Weekly Tickets.

The design of bus tickets was often carried forward for years after an original purpose had disappeared. E.g. a "W.Ret." panel could appear on tickets for ages after the abolition of Workman Returns. This phenomenon, termed "fossilisation" on tickets, occasionally applied to facilities as well; the



did not retain Station Garage; it was bought by E A L Maltby, who having no experience in running a garage, engaged P H Becker to help him. In 1947, the Gould family, who were old-established corn merchants, bought H Mann Ltd of Willingale, and in the same year acquired Station Garage. They also bought the livestock carriers business of H Bretton. These operations were grouped under the name Ongar Motors & Transport Co Ltd. At the time of my visit in April 1954, the part-time directors were A G Gould, B C Williams and P R H Gould, and the whole-time directors E A L Maltby and P H Becker. All these held shares, as did J Noble, the book-keeper. H Bretton had one share, but was non-active. The fleet at that time consisted of 19 lorries, 8 cattle floats and a box container, 2 service vans, one breakdown vehicle and 6 coaches. No stage carriage services or excursions were being worked; but there were school contracts".

Readers may care to ponder whether that is simply a confusing accumulation of useless information, or whether it reflects (a) that buildings themselves can be sources of transport history, (b) the diversity of interests that one, relatively small, road transport business can embrace, (c) how a collection of individuals of distinctly different skills and experience can weld such a business together and (d) that Charles Dunbar had a flair for noticing and probing all these facets.

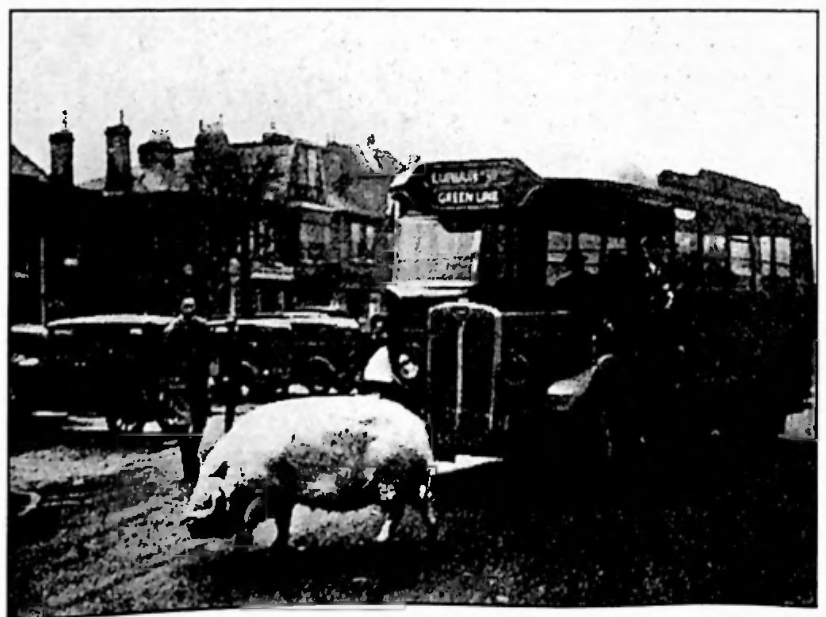
Weekly tickets on London Transport Country Buses are an example.

Having crossed over into Essex, the third and final county in these meanderings, may I now bring in a past historian, for whom I have always had enormous respect, the late Charles S Dunbar. We have already encountered him in this *Newsletter*, both brokering a sale of ex-Bradford Corporation buses to Sabena – I believe that at the time he was working for the Allied Control Commission in Germany, at the end of the War – and then being the original Editor of *Buses Illustrated* which started in 1949.

The Essex example of Charles Dunbar's work is far from being a major one, but is offered as an illustration of his capability of wide vision – embracing other modes of transport and other elements of history. He was visiting the Station Garage in Ongar, in 1954. "Station Garage," he wrote "it will be recalled was the address of E A Curtis' Ongar & District Motor Services, and the original registered office of Associated Coaches (Ongar) Ltd. Despite the demise of the Ongar – London services, Ongar & District continued and finally sold out to City Coach Co, Ltd in 1945. But City Coach

Anyway, time to finish. Let it be in Epping High Street, having to wait, on a rather grey afternoon, for a London Transport Green Line coach, which has been held up by a road hog. (Photo courtesy the *Omnibus Magazine* of April 1934).

RA



Horse Trams and Buses in Paris

In *Newsletter No.26* (September 2001), with a short follow-up in *No.27* on p.16, there was an article on trams and buses in Paris in 1887, based principally on the 1887-8 edition of the *Stranger's Guide to Paris*, published by Hachette. An earlier work, in French, not in English, had been the *Guide Rénier*. The September 1882 edition contained no map but went into great detail concerning every route, and the routes with which it was "en correspondance". A two-page spread for bus routes E and F is reproduced here. Note that both the colour of the bus, and the colour (or colours, if they were different) of its two lights illuminated at night, were shown.

The traveller had to be well versed in the artist's palette, if he were to distinguish by the subtlety of bus colour alone, an E from an F. (Brun Van-Dyck and Brun Foncé respectively). Indeed, if a reader of this *Newsletter*, equipped only with this page from the *Guide Rénier*, had in fact, in 1882, stood at, let us say, the Boulevard Beaumarchais wishing to travel to Pigalle, which bus would he have hailed, and where, and to what further bus or tram, would he have changed? We should not under-rate the skills in using public transport that our Victorian forefathers possessed.

Reg Westgate

7 ^e Pointe St-Eustache.	F Bastille — Place Wagram. J Montmartre — Pl. St-Jacques. Tr. Q Pl. St-Eustache — P. d'Ivry. Tr. F Cours de Vincennes — Louvre. Tr. G Montrouge — G. de l'Est. Tr. F Cours de Vincennes — Louvre. Tr. H Chapelle — Square Monge. E Madeleine — Bastille. O Mémorial — G. Montparnasse. S Barrière Char. — Pl. de la Rep.
8 ^e B. Sebastopol. 77.	
9 ^e B. Filles-du-Calvaire.	
FEU rouge E (VOITURES BRUN VAN-DYCK) E blanc DE LA MADELEINE A LA BASTILLE Parcours : 4,588 mètres. — Trajet : 32 minutes.	
ITINÉRAIRE Place de la Madeleine. Boulevard de la Madeleine. Boulevard des Capucines. Boulevard des Italiens, 8. Boulevard Montmartre. Boulevard Poissonnière. Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. Porte Saint-Denis. Boulevard Saint-Denis. Boulevard St-Martin. Place de la République. Boulevard du Temple. Boul. des Filles-du-Calvaire. Boul. Beaumarchais. Place de la Bastille.	
Lignes en correspondance : NORD. Levallois-Neuilly-Courbevoie. A Auteuil — Madeleine. AB Bourse — Passy. AF Panthéon — Courcelles. AC Petite-Ville — Champs-Élys. D Ternes — Filles-du-Calvaire. X Vaugirard — Gare-St-Lazare. H Clichy — Odéon. K B. St-Marc — G. du Nord. L Villette — St-Sulpice. M Belleville — Louvre. N St-Fargeau — Arts-et-Métiers. T G. d'Orl. — Square Montholon. Y Porte St-Martin — Grenelle. Tr. G Montrouge — G. de l'Est. Tr. H Chapelle — Square Monge. AD Pl. de la Rep. — Ecole Militaire. N Belleville — Louvre. U Pl. de la République — Montsouris. Ta. I Cimetière St-Ouen — Bastille. Ta. F Cours de Vincennes — Louvre. NORD Pl. de la Rep. — Aubervilliers. NORD Pl. de la République — Pantin. D Ternes — Filles-du-Calvaire. O Mémorial — Gare Mont.	

7 ^e Place de la Bastille.	F Bastille — Place Wagram. P Charonne — Place d'Italie. R G. de Lyon — Faub. St-Honoré. S Pl. de la Rep. — Barrière Char. Z Bastille — Grenelle. Tr. C Louvre — Vincennes. Tr. H Louvre — Charenton. Tr. L Bastille — Pont de l'Alma. T. Sud Bastille — Gare Montparnasse. T. Nord Bastille — Charenton.
FEU rouge F (VOITURES BRUN FONCÉ) F rouge DE LA PLACE WAGRAM A LA BASTILLE Parcours : 6,966 mètres. — Trajet : 53 minutes.	
ITINÉRAIRE Boulevard Malesherbes. Rue Joffroy. Rue de Tocqueville. Rue de Lévis. Rue Legendre. Boul. des Batignolles, 51. Rue Andréux. Rue de Constantinople. Rue de Rome. Gare Saint-Lazare. Rue Saint-Lazare. Place du Havre. Rue du Havre. Rue Auber. Place de l'Opéra. Rue du 4 Septembre. Place de la Bourse. R. Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. Rue Vido-Goussier. Place des Victoires. Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs. Rue Coquillière. Pointe Saint-Eustache. Rue Rambuteau. Rue des Francs-Bourgeois. Rue des Vosges. Boul. Beaumarchais. Place de la Bastille.	
Lignes en correspondance : 1 ^e Place Lévis. AJ Parc Monceau — La Vilette. 2 ^e B. Batignolles, 51. Tr. D Etienne — Villette. Tr. P Trocadero — Villette. B Gare de l'Est — Trocadero. 3 ^e Gare Saint-Lazare. AI Gare St-Lazare — Pl. St-Michel. X Vaugirard — Gare St-Lazare. T. NORD. Boul. Haussmann — St-Denis. T. NORD. B. Haussmann, Asinval, Gouev. 4 ^e Place de la Bourse. AB Bourse — Passy. I Pigalle — Halle aux vins. 5 ^e R. Croix-des-Petits-Champs. N Belleville — Louvre. V Maine — Gare du Nord. 6 ^e Pointe St-Eustache. Tr. F Cours de Vincennes — Louvre. D Ternes — Filles-du-Calvaire. J Montmartre — Pl. St-Jacques. Tr. Q Porte d'Ivry — P. St-Eustache. 7 ^e Rue Rambuteau. T G. d'Orléans — Sq. Montholon.	

Fashions in Horse Buses

Michael Baines writes:

I recently had sight of a copy of *Picture Post* for 4 May 1940. I was captivated by a letter from a reader, S Johnson of London; it is reproduced below. In spite of the fact that the country, indeed most of Europe, was in the throes of conflict, the erudite Johnson took the trouble to highlight inaccuracies in a horse bus depicted in a film called "Gaslight". It is good to know that our interest in transport history has a precedent. I am sure that when S Johnson penned the letter, he little knew that it would stimulate interest over 60 years later.

Apparently, the people concerned with the filming of *Gaslight* (April 20) have been to some pains to make it true

to life. But you give us, in your last issue, a large picture of a horse bus and label it 1880. Unfortunately, it clearly shows a type of "garden seat" bus, which was first put on the road in 1887. The seats themselves are seen to be fitted with guards against pickpockets. These did not come into use until about 1895. The advertisements were not of a type issued before about 1898.

No advertisements were placed beside the driver's seat before 1890; until then, the spaces were used for destination boards. The lamp on the offside window is of a pattern passed by the police in about 1896. So it is very clear that this type of bus did not run until about 1898; yet it is dated 1880!

Omnibus Society Presidential Weekend 2004

As already noted in these columns, this year. One of our corporate members, The Omnibus Society, is celebrating the 75th Anniversary of its founding. The President for 2004 is Transport for London's Peter Hendy (Managing Director of Surface Transport) and so, in keeping with tradition, the annual dinner and Presidential Weekend took place in London. Over the four days participants were able to see every aspect of Transport for London – Buses, Trams, the Underground, Taxis, River Boats and London's Transport Museum. Among the places visited was the joint Metropolitan Police and London Buses Service Control Room where, for the first time, incidents affecting buses which require police co-operation (and vice-versa) can be acted upon immediately by the joint staff in the one Control Room. In the wilds of Hackney Marshes we saw the adjacent depots of both Stagecoach and First, and were privileged to take a short ride on one of London's allocation of three Hydrogen Cell buses currently on simultaneous trials in a number of European cities. A powerful catamaran conveyed the party down river from Westminster to Rotherhithe for the Annual Dinner. At Acton we saw the London's Transport Museum reserve collection and heard about plans for the second refurbishment of the Covent Garden museum site. A tour

over the route of the proposed Uxbridge Road Light Rail scheme revealed problems that will be encountered in re-establishing trams along this busy artery. A visit to Croydon's Tramlink depot showed what it is like to run such a system.

Our final visit was to the Public Carriage Office (PCO), where taxis and their drivers are examined and where private hire vehicle licensing is being brought under a similar scheme. Three intrepid members took a short deviation from the obvious route to reach the PCO from Kings Cross Thameslink and were rewarded by finding three former buildings with transport connections still standing, although now used for different purposes: Horse Bus Stables in Britannia Street with a stone lintel clearly bearing the full London General Omnibus Company name; a Horse Tram Shed of the London Street Tramways in Lorenzo Street and the Claremont Garage at 79-91 Pentonville Road which was an independent's bus garage from 1924 and subsequently used as a long distance coach station. A more comprehensive week-end of past, present and future would be hard to achieve.

Tony Newman

New Towns ~ Creating a sense of community

Roy Bevin notes that in the issue of the 'Crawley Observer' dated 28 May 1954, there was printed a letter from the Headmaster, Langley Grange School, under the heading 'An Open Letter to London Transport'.. Here is a part of the letter:

The 483 bus and the new 476 show on their destination indicators respectively Crawley and Northgate, and Crawley and Langley Green. Northgate and Langley Green are

neighbourhoods of the town, and so are part of Crawley itself. To suggest that the New Towners who live in these neighbourhoods do not belong to Crawley but need to take a bus to reach it, is to destroy the whole conception of the town as a closely knit community of neighbourhoods.

Another aspect of London Transport's approach to the New Towns of the 1950s is noticed, in relation to Harlow, on page 13 of this *Newsletter*.

The Picture Bus

I am not sure how far back it goes, but when I was running a country bus company in the 1950s, we had a number of evening circular services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays bringing people in from the villages we served usually on market day and Saturday. The bus, — a 29-seat Bedford — arrived about 6-45 pm and left again about 10-45 pm, giving passenger time to go to the cinema, or for a drink or to see relatives and friends. They loaded well; the driver got an extra bit of pay; and there was a useful contribution to revenue. In the Eastern Traffic Area, no conductor was required for a forward entrance bus of 30 seats or less.

A note in the trade press recently reminded me in an unusual way. It set out the requirements for driver licensing and for

insurance, making it clear that they applied whether or not there was payment for the journey. Now, from time to time our manager would ring me at home about 10-30 pm to say that the bus had not arrived to pick the people up, so rather than chase someone up, I would drive to the depot and collect a vehicle, taking the passengers home without payment — for I had no PSV driver's licence.

You could not do that today. The picture buses disappeared as electricity was extended to village after village and the TV aerials went up. But I read in *Newsletter* No.37 at page 15, of the advent of the Bingo bus in March 1962 — good luck to them.

John Hibbs

Editorial

This *Newsletter* has material contributed by 20 or more different contributors. From an Editor's point of view, this is splendid. It helps diversity of topic and encourages members' participation. If you want to participate, please do so. Articles,

small items, Letters to the Editor, particulars of sources of information, something about yourself, comment on what you have read in *Newsletter* — all are welcome.