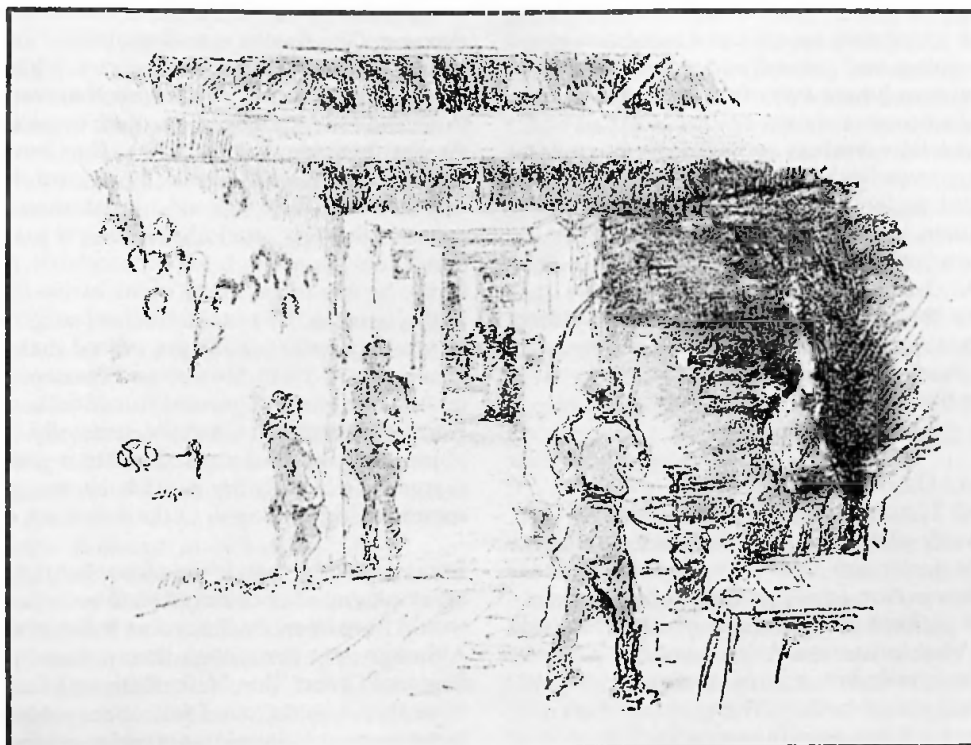


Newsletter

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The Roads & Road Transport History Association

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THE TYRESMITH 1890

By James Abbott McNeill Whistler

From the edition published in "The Whirlwind"
15 November 1890.

Lithograph drawn on transfer paper. Smithies and forges fascinated Whistler throughout his career and are frequent subjects in both his etchings and lithographs. "The Tyresmith" depicts the interior of a wheelwright's workshop in Chelsea. The two

smiths are shown mending the hoop of a wheel. Transferred to the Whitworth Art Gallery from the History of Art Department, University of Manchester, 1960. (Reference P.20095)

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Discrimination ~ the 1963 colour bar dispute at Bristol

Dave Bubier

This is an enhanced version of an article that originally appeared in the Omnibus Society Provincial Historical Research Group Newsletter No.116

Whilst the bus industry has had a long history of employment of immigrant labour to overcome staff shortages, London Transport taking the lead in the post-war period in directly recruiting from the West Indies, the path of integration was far from smooth in the days before it became unacceptable to practice discrimination on racial grounds. It took a long time for coloured bus crews to become commonplace and generally acceptable in many provincial cities; even longer away from the urban areas. Some of the prejudice once shown against coloured bus workers by their fellow workers and even passengers was quite astonishing, even frightening, in hindsight. The first coloured seasonal student conductor at Herne Bay in 1960 (pleasant, articulate, but very black) found the elderly ladies of the town just too nervous to board his bus - fear of the unknown? One who did, however, obviously understood these things better, imperiously commanding, "You, boy, ringa-de-bell, next stop!" It is not so easy now for second and third generation immigrants to fully appreciate what their parents and grandparents went through.

On joining Bristol Omnibus (the city Joint Services division) in 1967, I found a very different working environment to any previous experience. Staff turnover was high, public perception of the company low, and the job generally seen as stop-gap employment by all except the hard core of perhaps only 25%, exclusively white, 'old hands'. Black, (West Indian and Asian) made up a sizeable proportion of the remainder - mainly conducting, relatively few had progressed to driving at this stage although that process was escalating rapidly. One soon found a rigid canteen culture in place; it was customary for the ethnic groups to use separate tables and you did not automatically sit with one's conductor during breaks, albeit you were supposedly sharing a shift for a week at a time. An early shock was to witness Jack Hodge, the charismatic full-time Union official, walk over and thump the Asian table and loudly order them to speak only English, "If the money is good enough for you, so is the language....!" to loud cheers. Was it a fear they were talking in derisory terms, even plotting, against us? Racist jokes and comments (some quite serious) were rife, particularly about the amount of overtime worked by some of the Asians. Double shifts, flouting even the more relaxed regulations of those times, were a commonplace, but the plain truth was that many of the white staff worked just as many extra hours. Drivers sufficiently hostile as not to leave their cabs at terminals to sit with their coloured conductor; white conductresses tacitly entitled to a change of late shift if their allocated driver was black. Typically, however even those most prejudiced white drivers seemed content to work with the younger female West Indian staff! There were, of course, no female Asian employees given their more rigid cultural conventions. Fortunately I was to witness a welcome process of integration and better acceptance develop over the ensuing years, but nonetheless even as late as 1975

there was a degree of management reluctance to take a chance on promoting our first, long well-qualified, coloured inspector.

At this time (1967) only a few of the coloured staff had as much as four years service behind them as it was only in 1963 that Bristol Omnibus finally lifted a bar on the employment of such. This ban had been long suspected, and e had been a well orchestrated campaign and boycott of the buses by the ethnic minorities once it had been exposed. Guy Bayley, a well qualified West Indian of impeccable education and character, whom I remember well, was set up for an interview that was very promptly cancelled once his skin colour was revealed. The then General Manager, Ian Patey, was thus forced to admit that there was such a ban, declaring that employment of coloured road staff was considered unacceptable on the grounds that few would have met the necessary educational or even character standards. In the ensuing furore he was to get much of the blame for the instigation of this ban but there is little in his background to suggest he was any more racially prejudiced than others of his generation (b-1910). He was an experienced Tilling manager having progressed from Southern Vectis via Hants & Dorset and Crosville, generally rated amiable and popular by staff and a noted amateur golfer who had represented his country as such. He was probably somewhat right wing in outlook, but not unreasonably so.

To my mind the real driving force behind the pre-1963 ban on employment of coloured staff by Bristol Omnibus would have been the Transport & General Workers Union. Although contrary to their then national policy the Regional Officer, Ron Nethercott, was forced to admit that more than a background fear of the economic consequences of immigrants taking up the available jobs, and with it overtime, etc, played a part. My own experience of the union hierarchy was that this background prejudice did exist, even if officially frowned upon, and few coloured members ever attended branch meetings. Again that was contradictory; our National Organiser at that time was none other than Bill Morris!* Bristol had somewhat of a history in this respect, in the 1930s there was some discrimination against imported Welsh labour, with this applying, it is reported, on Bristol Tramways, as well as elsewhere in the city. Even today the arrival of Polish drivers with First provokes derisory comments, even if mild in tone to what has been known in the past. In the wake of the 1963 affair, the company perhaps sought to curb the one hard line power base of the union, by citing other factors during major service revisions in 1964 as reasons to close the Eastville depot. Given a policy of doing staff changeovers away from the city centre, the loss of Eastville seemed illogical even during my time with the company.

A well researched history of the 1963 Bristol buses colour bar dispute was published in 1986.#. Written by Madge Dresser and containing much valuable oral history from those involved on all sides, it does suffer from that problem a second generation immigrant has in fully comprehending the nature of the underlying racial

prejudice that once was almost endemic in the population at large. Even around 1968, when I related the Herne Bay anecdote (above) to a youngish West Indian audience there was amused disbelief.

* Bill Morris, (now Sir Bill Morris) was pictured in *Newsletter No.40, p.10*, presenting a 2004 Bus Industry Award to the Bowland Transit team (including our member, Sue Buckley)

Black & White on the Buses, Bristol BroadSides, ISBN 0 906944 30 9

Hauling for the Engineering Industry

Richard Storey

H&H Motorways of Coventry and Kenilworth was a relatively short-lived West Midlands and Warwickshire transport business with a somewhat complex history, acquisitions giving links back to an earlier transport era. Its activity was particularly associated with the needs of the local engineering industry in the Second World War and the post-war reconstruction period, when it operated as something of a machinery removal specialist. However, after the war its failure to replace its Defence Permits with A and B licences may have hindered development.

Its name derived from the founders, H Cecil Hemmings and A D Huckvale, who began as H & H Transport in the late 1930s; a single-vehicle contract for the GPO Supplies Department, operated by a Leyland Cub lorry, was followed by expansion with work for the Standard Motor Co of Canley, Coventry. Traffic included coal and ash, aero engine carburettors to Rover at Solihull and longer-distance work to Standards' No.1 Aero Engine Factory at Kendal, which came on stream in mid-1942. Other wartime traffic included pom-pom guns from Heenan & Froude Ltd at Worcester to Perth, and, more locally, Bren gun carrier and Churchill tank tracks from Fords' Leamington Spa foundry to Warwick, and on occasions Kenilworth station. Scammell mechanical horse units were initially used on this work; a Leyland Cub tipper, after bomb damage, was converted to a low-loader; these small vehicles were useful for their ability to drive into factory and machine store premises with restricted access. Fords also generated longer-distance traffic between Leamington and its main Dagenham works.

Developing as 'machinery removal specialist' (as their Eagle small-wheeled drawbar trailer proclaimed), other H&H customers during and after the war included British Thomson-Houston (BT-H), Rugby (transformers); Modern Machine Tools, Coventry; a Ministry of Supply depot in Priory Road, Kenilworth; a Royal Engineers depot at Long Marston; Lumley Saville, tractor dealers and plant operators of Stratford-on-Avon; James Archdale Ltd of Worcester; and tractors for land drainage work and machinery for open-cast coal mining.

One unusual wartime traffic comprised dodgem and equipment for the Super-Car Co, which had moved from Coventry to Warwick. H&H itself relocated its main base to Warwick Road, Kenilworth after the blitz on Coventry. Kenilworth remained its central servicing and repair depot, with a filling station and car repair workshop being added to the site.

The business of Thomas Wise of Warwick was acquired during the war with a mixed fleet of about half a dozen lorries, which was re-equipped with four new Maudslay Meritor and Mogul lorries and (according to one source) drawbar trailers. Traffic included Leamington – Dagenham work for Fords, flour from local mills for the Ministry of Food and gas stoves for Flavels of Leamington. Wise had come into road haulage from the operation of steam threshing tackle, and Sentinel steam wagons were in use by them before motor lorries. Early traffic included potatoes from Lincolnshire, corn to Emscote Mill, Warwick and coal to Barford gas works. Another haulage firm acquired was JHC Transport of Kingswinford, with a Leyland Octopus, ERF, two Maudslay six-wheelers and one other six-wheeler. These operated round the clock for the Steel Company of Wales, carrying scrap from Wordesley to Pentaeg and returning with steel sheets.

The H&H Motorways (instead of H&H Transport) title was adopted with the purchase of the Coventry coach and lorry business of R G W Coombes. Founded in 1920, it operated a mixed fleet of Leyland, Dennis and Bedford OB coaches (replaced as ten Daimlers), under the name Bunty Coaches, and some ten or a dozen, mainly Bedford lorries. Other PSV operators acquired were Highfield Coaches, with two Maudslays; Hughes of Bulkington, with six Bedford OWBs, serving Newdigate Colliery; and the National Union of Mineworkers' Haunchwood Colliery bus fleet. Further afield, Dunstable Coaches Ltd were purchased, but sold off to Travel House (Luton) Ltd in 1951. The haulage businesses were nationalised as Unit E73 to form part of British Road Services 2E Coventry Group, and the coach business was sold to Red House Motor Services of Coventry in 1961.

Acknowledgements and notes:

The above is a revised version of an entry prepared for the *Companion to British Road Haulage History*, but omitted for reasons of space. Earlier versions appeared, as work in progress, in the annual publications of the Kenilworth History & Archaeology Society. The history of Kenilworth's light engineering activity, closely related to that of its larger neighbour, is given in Robin D Leach, *Kenilworth's Engineering Age* (1995). The author's thanks for information and advice are due to Gordon Mustoe and Messrs. W H and W J Cox.

Bath Chair Driver's Licence: Fact or Fiction

This article is reproduced in *Newsletter* by kind permission of the Editor of *The Revenue Journal of Great Britain*. It originally appeared in the June 2005 of the *Revenue Journal* and was brought to our attention by our member Dr E Keith Lloyd, who is also a member of the Revenue Society of Great Britain – a body which receives mention elsewhere in this *Newsletter*. The article was by Ed Hitchings:

In my searches for new material I recently came across this item (Fig.1). At first I thought that it was a scam; a fun item produced between the wars, especially as it was dated 1st April. However, all was not as it had seemed at first glance. The licence (160mm x 205mm) was issued to Sidney Stickles of Godwin Road by the Borough of Margate – an English seaside resort – on 1st April 1936. It entitled him to ply for hire with his Bath chair. The licence has an embossed seal for the Borough and was signed (stamped) by the Town Clerk. There is no mention of the cost of the licences, but it did run for one year. On the back are the rules that apply to the licence and a list of the approved ranks where the driver could ply for hire.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines a Bath chair as a wheeled chair for an invalid. Further investigation has revealed that it was a three or four-wheeled vehicle, with two large wheels at the back and small wheels at the front; it was pulled by means of a long handle and the front wheels were used for steering. The capital 'B' refers to the English city of Bath, shown on the postcard illustrated



Licence No. 11

Borough of Margate

Bath Chair Driver's Licence

We, the MAYOR, ALDERMEN and BURGESSES of the BOROUGH OF MARGATE, acting by the Council of the said Borough under and by virtue of the powers enabling us in this behalf,

Do hereby Licence and authorise

Sidney Stickles

of 65 Godwin Road, Margate

to act as Driver of Bath Chairs to ply for hire within the said Borough, subject to the Bye-laws, Rules, Orders and Regulations made or to be made by the said Council, and for the time being in force within the Borough.

This licence to commence from the day of the date hereof, and to be in force, unless suspended or revoked, for one year thence next ensuing, or until the next general licensing day appointed by the said Council, which shall first happen and no longer.

Given under the CORPORATE SEAL of the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Margate,

this *First* day of *April* 19 *36*

Town Clerk

[Reconstruction – not a photocopy – of a Licence]

here. Bath boasts a hot-spring spa dating back to pre-Roman times. Bath chairs usually had a foldable hood and cover.

Bath chairs must have been a common sight in Victorian and Edwardian Margate. I have been told that scenes from those times often featured rows of Bath chairs waiting for the use of invalids who came to the seaside on medical advice to take advantage of the renowned "sea air". They could be hired by the day or by the hour, and some hotels owned their own Bath chairs for the use of their guests. Shaw's Hotel services in King Street hired out Bath chairs by the day or week.

Having been in touch with Margate Library, it transpires that over the years there were quite a few Bath chair drivers in Margate. Unfortunately the Library has very little contemporary information. Much of their paperwork was destroyed due to war damage and they suffered badly from the 1953 floods. They were however able to provide me with many interesting facts, along with a copy of a 1904 licence. This licence, numbered "18", was issued by Margate Police to a Mr George Davis (aged 70 years) on 12th May. The text states that "Licence must be produced at all times when required by a Police Constable or other Officer of this Borough".

The original rules and regulations concerning the use and hire of Bath chairs were issued in 1880, with the prices for the use of Bath chairs being set by the Corporation. In 1894, Margate Council issued 37 individual Bath chair licences and 32 for goat or donkey chaises. At that time there was a 1d toll for promenaders between Newgate and Hodge's Flagstaff and the Council also recommended



"Seaside Sports: a suggestion for a wet day. Bath-chair race along the deserted Parade. The last past the post pays for all the chairs."

that there should be a 2d toll for Bath chairs. *Punch* magazine captured the spirit of English seaside holidays in a cartoon of 1898.

1904 (July) saw the completion of a large, sheltered seat at Buenos Ayres, which is situated on the coast road between Margate and Westgate-on-Sea; it had the added feature of being able to accommodate "invalid bath-chairs". By 1905, Bath chairs could be hired from recognised stands which were marked by iron plates set into the kerb and situated in Roxburgh Road, Westgate Bay Avenue and St Mildred's Road.

In 1912, the annual Bath chair drivers' outing took place with them travelling in four horse brakes. In later years it was reported that they used horse breaks and charabancs. In January 1913, the Bath chairmen of Margate, numbering 45, sat down to their annual hot supper. By 1931, the use of Bath chairs was in decline and one Councillor was quoted as asking: "Invalid carriages and Bath chairs on the front were one of the sights of Margate; where are they now?"

Three years later. In 1934, a Councillor was quoted as saying "No longer do we see from 30 - 60 Bath chairs on the front in wintertime, instead Margate in the winter is like a dead city". Unfortunately, the next piece is undated and cannot be attributed to any individual:

"I recollect (and I am going back a very long way) the Bath chairs which were hired out to sick visitors recuperating in the wonderful healings of the sea air. I can remember the names of three bath chair hirers. There was Stivvy Garner who lived at 1 Westbury Road, Jack Dyke who lived at 20 Westbury Road, and Sammy Clark who lived at 15 Essex Road. Stivvy Garner and Jack Dyke stored their Bath chairs in specially constructed shed sin the back gardens. Iron plates marked the Bath chair stands and were fitted to the kerbstones. The three bath chair hirers would ply for hire on these recognised stands. Often they would be seen sitting their chairs waiting for their customers in much the same way as taxi drivers do today."

I have been able to find a couple of postcards that show Bath chairs. The first, posted in 1923, shows the Queen's Parade and Cliftonville, Margate; in the foreground a Bath chair can clearly be seen. [Not reproduced here]. The Bath chairs in Bath [illustrated above].

So a chance find, which was originally seen as a possible 'April Fool' has turned out to be a genuine licence which has given an insight into a long-forgotten age. I would imagine that many people living in Margate today would have no idea what a Bath chair was, let alone that it was once a common sight on their promenade. I would like to thank Margate Museum for their help in researching the history and story of this unusual licence.

Macadam

Roy Larkin

Throughout history men and women have given their names to the English language through their inventions. Macintosh, Hoover and Biro are obvious examples and in the transport world there are Samuel Plimsoll, Leopold von Asphalt and even Heath Robinson.

John Loudon McAdam gave his name, albeit accidentally, not only to a product that had a far reaching affect on the progress of road transport, but also to a company renowned for its road building expertise.

McAdam's interest in road building began around 1780, although it wasn't until 1798, when he moved from Scotland to Bristol that his interest was turned into a business that would expand throughout the country. Never a great road builder, such as Thomas Telford, McAdam built his reputation on rebuilding and improving the turnpikes, not in building new roads.

The turnpikes at this time were constructed of large stones which became easily displaced leaving huge potholes, making travel difficult at best and often impossible in bad weather. The turnpike trusts were heavily in debt and

McAdam determined that the level of debt was proportional to the quality of road. He began what was almost a crusade to improve the standard of the roads.

McAdam's theory was that the stones used in road building should be small, pebble-size of no more than 1 inch diameter. These would compact and consolidate under pressure from the traffic into a durable and comparatively smooth road surface with greatly reduced maintenance costs.

In January 1816, he was given the opportunity to put theory into practice when he was appointed General Surveyor by the Bristol Turnpike Trust with 149 miles of road under his jurisdiction. Surveyors at this time were managers appointed to oversee the costs of the turnpikes and to procure labour and materials.

At this time Bristol had 15 surveyors, though nobody appointed to supervise them and McAdam immediately reduced this to 10, each under his direct control. Trusts appointed surveyors to individual stretches of road and these surveyors used their position to fill their pockets at

the expense of the trusts. McAdam was the first appointed surveyor to oversee all of a trust's roads and realised his own success would depend on reducing the trust's costs and debt. Meeting resistance to his methods, he gradually replaced these with members of his own family.

By 1819, Bristol's roads were much improved, more durable and more importantly, the debt had been reduced on a year on year basis. McAdam's name was becoming known throughout the country with debt-laden trusts queuing for his services. To accommodate these trusts, more and more of McAdam's family were appointed as surveyors. It says much for his stamina that between the ages of 69 and 77 McAdam added 17 surveyorships to his Bristol one, the last one being the Perth to Blairgowrie road in 1833.

McAdam always concentrated on rebuilding and improving existing roads, which enabled him to further enhance his reputation by claiming his methods were considerably cheaper than Telford, who mainly built new roads. Telford did, however, have the cost of buying and transporting stone from quarry to his new road, whereas McAdam used existing materials without the need for transport, something he always neglected to mention. McAdam re-used the existing road material by breaking the large stones into small pebbles. This was done by hand labour because it was cheap. Usually children were used but whole families were often used. The man received payment per quantity of stones, so often enlisted wife and children to boost his income. McAdam even went as far as to instruct children on the best sitting position for breaking stones with a hammer. Farm labourers were a source of workers and many men were returning from Napoleonic wars to find no available work. The stone breaking would have been done on site, by digging up the existing road and back-filling with the broken stones.

As his influence spread countrywide, the term 'macadam' started to be used for the road's construction and roads rebuilt by McAdam were said to be 'macadamised'. McAdam's roads proved durable, but the problems of dust and slippery surfaces when wet had not been solved. These problems became more important towards the end of the nineteenth century, as cyclists increased in numbers. Full of enthusiasm for the freedom the bicycle afforded, cyclists became very vocal about their enjoyment being impaired by the condition of the roads.

A partial solution was to bind the surface with tar, which had been used since 1832 in towns. This reduced dust, but proved not very durable or skid resistant and did not create a smooth surface, merely following the contours of the stones. It remained the road, rather than the bicycle that was the 'bone-shaker'.

In 1901, Mr Ernest Purnell Hooley, who was County Surveyor of Nottingham and had a keen interest in the use of tar on roads, noticed an accident on the road near to Denby Iron Works. A barrel of tar had been spilt onto a covering of slag from the furnaces, resulting in a dust free, hard wearing surface.

Hooley managed to replicate the accident and develop a new road building material. To produce it, he formed a new company called 'TarMacadam (Purnell Hooley's Patent) Syndicate Limited'. This was quickly amended to 'Tarmac Ltd' and so tarmacadam and tarmac, entered the English language.

McAdam, the first County Surveyor, died in 1836. Unknowingly, sixty-five years after his death he gave his name to another product, discovered by another County Surveyor that would advance road building, just as he himself had done in his lifetime.

Signposts

Readers may care to know of a Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 6/05 on Traditional Direction Signs. The leaflet is available free from the Department for Transport, telephone 020 7944 2478.

It recognises that 'traditional direction signs' (which their leaflet calls them, but "Oh, you mean signposts" they said, when I phoned up for it) make a contribution to the local character and identity of suburbs, villages and rural areas. It urges the protection and care of those that still survive; it even urges reintroduction of fingerposts on roads that do not carry an 'A' or 'B' classification. Only upper case lettering should be used. Modern signs and symbols should not be added to fingerposts. (The leaflet illustrates an appalling example of this). By contrast, a new cast iron fingerpost to traditional design, at Salternshill, Hampshire is illustrated in the leaflet, and reproduced here.



The leaflet offers a very brief historical background, but at least giving pointers to major relevant legislation such as the General Turnpike Act of 1773 and the Motor Car Act of 1903. (It does not mention, except as a minor 'aside', the wartime countrywide removal of milestones and direction

signs, that was carried out to devastating effect, under the Removal of Direction Signs Order, imposed in Summer 1940 under the Defence of the Realm Act). It refers to funding that may be available to community groups from the Local Heritage Initiative, a Heritage Lottery Fund grant scheme run by the Countryside Agency. It even closes with a short bibliography. This includes one item that your Editor has not had time to seek out; but if any reader is aware of it and would write a contribution for a later *Newsletter*, it will certainly be considered. The item is: Department for Transport: *The History of British Traffic Signs* (1999).

Ed.RA

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Association Matters

► NEW MEMBERS

John Carr, Huddersfield
M.W. Jobling, Ilkeston
David Grimmett, Minehead
Giles Fearnley, Harrogate

► RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

We asked members in August to complete a short questionnaire on research activities to give Tony Newman an overall picture of work being undertaken by members. We have only had a limited response so far from members and we would be grateful if the questionnaires could be completed and returned to us as soon as possible. Further copies of the questionnaire can be obtained by writing to the secretarial address or e-mailing

RoadsandRTHA@aol.com.

► ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will take place next spring on **Saturday 11th March 2006** at the Coventry Transport Museum.

► SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

On the back the 2006 Membership Renewal Form members were invited to buy the booklets of Symposium Papers for 2002 and 2004, and to place an advance order for those for

2005. Several have already done so, and at the time of going to press all orders have been fulfilled. But 2004 papers are now running very low; no problem with 2002 papers.

However, a cache of 2003 papers, "A Medley of Thoughts" – previously thought to be sold out – has come to light. These are offered at £2-50 post free. (They are thinner than the other years). If you would like a copy, please add them to your Renewal Form or, if you have already renewed, please send a cheque made out to Roads & Road Transport History Association Ltd to

**Gordon Knowles,
7 Squirrels Green, Great Bookham,
Leatherhead KT23 3LE**

Members who came to the 2005 Symposium will receive the 2005 papers free of charge (hopefully early in January). Members who did not manage to come can order the 2005 papers @ £5-00 on their Membership Renewal Form. Several have done so already and this is a help to the Editor in determining the print run to order.

Newsletter No.45

- The target date for issue of No. 45 is
9 March 2006
Contributions by
7 February please
- Provisional target date for No. 46 is
8 June 2006
Contributions by **9 May**
- The 2006 subscription covers Nos.45 to 48

In Newsletter No.45 it is hoped to include:

- Wrexham Tramways' proposed extension in 1924
- (Possibly) a survey of Ambulances at various periods
- One or two items held over from Nos.43 or 44
- And hopefully, you, the readers, will keep up a steady flow of Letters, Introducing our Members, and articles.

September Business Meeting

Our September Business Meeting at the Coventry Transport Museum was attended by twenty-one members. Garry Turvey asked members to observe a minute's silence to remember Roy Bevin and Reg Westgate. He welcomed everybody present especially David Cooke from the Norwich Traffic Club attending his first meeting and John Hibbs, returned to good health following his recent operation.

Chris Hogan gave a short presentation on the progress of the Association and the work on the Board since the last meeting:

- A net increase of seven members to 104 with the recruitment of nine new members including three corporate members;
- Financially after six months budgeting to break even on the Association's day-to-day running expenses;
- Activities to promote the

Association – website, membership prospectus, direct approaches to potential corporates;

- Update on the 2005 Symposium;
- The Passenger Companion – approaches to potential publishers and strengthening of the editorial group;
- Welcome to Tony Newman as Research Co-ordinator;
- August visit to LTI plant in Coventry.

John Hibbs was thanked for recruiting the Institute of Transport Administration and three of its members on a personal basis. Gordon Knowles thought that unplanned additional expenditure in the second half of the year might mean a loss on the day-to-day costs. Chris Salaman thanked the Association for arranging the visit to Carbodies.

Garry Turvey introduced a discussion on **Private Archives**. Bill Taylor had originally raised the question with the Association but was unable to attend the Business Meeting in person. Instead Bill had provided a short paper drawing on the parallels with aviation, which has a strong and vibrant historical research movement. The activities of individuals have been fostered by organisations such as Air Britain, and all aspects of aviation history are researched by individuals, ranging from the history of individual aircraft to the development of airlines and airfields. There has been a proliferation of private archives. At the higher level, there are a variety of Museums associated with the Armed Forces.

For some years now private historians and researchers have wondered what might be done with their own archives when they no longer need them. Often these archives cover subjects, which are not 'core business' for the national museums, but may cover national or international topics, taking them beyond the scope of local archives. A national repository, which might accept the archives of individuals, small companies or other organisations has been sought. These concerns have been heeded by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS), and a project for a "National Aviation Library and Archive" is already underway and a location has been found at the historic Farnborough site. A bid for Heritage Lottery Fund support is envisaged to meet costs of storage, indexing etc.

Bill asked whether there was a need for something similar in the field of roads and road transport history to act as a repository for the archives of individuals, small companies and other sources which might otherwise fall outside the collecting policies of existing national and local museums?

Garry Turvey invited comments on Bill's paper and the following points were made:

- Peter Jaques of the Kithead Trust gave a short presentation on the Kithead Trust and its archives. Many company records and private collections had been placed in its care.
- Ian Yearsley of the Tramway Museum Society similarly outlined work at the Crich Archive. He considered that there were three aspects to be borne in mind:
 - 1 Storage space;
 - 2 The importance of cataloguing, as the archive was of little use until it was catalogued; and the difficulty of undertaking this work on a voluntary basis;
 - 3 The criteria for accepting private collections into an archive and the difficulties that can result from stipulations such as complete retention.
- Peter Jaques advised that Kithead declined to accept private collections with such stipulations. Ian Yearsley agreed that it was often necessary to rationalise collections by disposing of duplicate material.
- Ken Swallow felt that the Association had two rôles:
 - 1 In the work of cataloguing and finding volunteers, and recounted his work with the Greater Manchester Record Office over eighteen months;
 - 2 Co-ordination of activities.
- Roger Cragg agreed that the Association's efforts should be concentrated on co-ordinating activities.

- Peter Jaques reminded the meeting of the A2A archive catalogue on the web. He said that Kithead often referred researchers to other archives, such as Ironbridge, and felt that this could be formalised. However A2A was essentially professional archivists and still left a lot of non-professional archives to be identified. A number of railway societies were currently working on identifying non-A2A archives and he suggested that the Association might do something in the road transport field.
- Tony Newman felt that this discussion would broaden the scope of the Research Co-ordinator's remit and appealed for more help from the membership. He was happy to co-ordinate such activities and felt that discussion with the National Archives at Kew should resume to ensure it was aware of the Association's activities.
- Richard Storey made a plea that the Association should not seek to reinvent the wheel with organisations such as A2A and the National Archives already established. He agreed that space and cataloguing were the two crucial problems and cautioned that all lottery funding had to be "match-funded". Instead, he suggested the way forward was to use County Record Offices; they had the space and the expertise to deal with such archives. County Archivists could also advise of other suitable depositories. He recommended that part of collections could be transferred before death.
- Chris Salaman noted that for forty years, the road haulage history had kept very little in the way of records. All records were the work of individuals with members of the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club holding vast collections of material between them. The problem again was that little was collated and catalogued. He suggested that educational establishments might be potential depositories.

Garry Turvey summed up the discussion: The Association did not seek to establish another depository, nor would it seek to reinvent the wheel but rather navigate collections toward established archives such as Kithead.

► The Companion to Public Road Transport History in Great Britain and Ireland.

Richard Storey updated the meeting on the work of the Editorial Group working on the draft of the "Passenger Companion". The project followed on from the Association's earlier work on the Road Haulage Companion. A bibliography had been ruled out for the Passenger Companion, as the volume of material would probably fill a separate volume. He appealed for assistance in two areas:

- 1 Somebody able to give occasional assistance in the IT field and in particular giving help with transferring data between different formats;
- 2 Major entries requiring authors:

• Accidents	• Bus garages
• AEC	• Coach stations
• Airport services	• Daimler
• Airside buses	• Dorman Diesels
• Associated Motorways	• Duple
• Beadle	• Fleet numbering
• "Bendibus"	• Gardner
• BET	• Gilford
• Black & White	• Hants & Sussex

- Horse Power
- Lowbridge buses
- MacBrayne
- Metal Sections Ltd.
- Midi-buses
- Municipal undertakings
- National Federation of Bus Users
- Park & Ride services
- Platform staff
- Plaxton
- Premier Travel
- Publicity
- Railways and bus operation including rail replacement services
- Red & White
- Royal Blue
- Six-wheeled psvs
- Stage Coach era
- Taxis (help needed with partially completed entry)
- Thomas Tilling
- Timetables
- Tyres
- Utility buses

Any member with IT knowledge and able to assist the group, or who had made a study of the topics above and was willing to draft an entry was asked to contact either Richard Storey or Ian Yearsley. Peter Jaques suggested substituting "the British Isles" for "Great Britain & Ireland". Richard Storey undertook to consider this within the Editorial Group.

► Anniversaries

Garry Turvey noted that 2005 was the year of road transport anniversaries with the Automobile Association reaching its centenary in June. Both of the road freight industry's journals, Commercial Motor and Motor Transport, were first published in 1905; the Austin Motor Company and the Scottish Motor Traction Company were formed in 1905 as well. Roll forward twenty-five years to 1930 and another landmark was the Road Traffic Act bringing the creation of the Traffic Commissioners, while the Transport Association celebrates fifty years and the Road Haulage Association sixty years. The pressures of modern business have little time for nostalgia and all too often a historical perspective on transport is lacking. In closing, Garry hoped that the Association could do more in the future to tell the outside world of its work through external articles, talks, etc.

► Road Haulage History

John Hibbs made a plea for someone to write a history of the road haulage industry. He recalled the background to his own "History of British Bus Services". He hoped

someone would write a book on the same lines about 'The History of British Road Freight Transport'. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- Richard Storey suggested using a Business Meeting to brainstorm the skeleton of the book;
- Roy Larkin thought the Association could consider employing a professional writer for the book;
- Garry Turvey thought that getting access to industry archives would be possible and that material would not be a stumbling block, but finance would be;
- David Lowe suggested a professional writer would look for a fee of about £10k;
- Ian Yearsley thought such a book might be funded with a grant or an advance fee from the publisher;

Garry Turvey summed up and agreed that the Board would investigate the idea in depth to establish the practicalities.

► Freedom of Information Acts.

Chris Hogan outlined his experiences in using the Freedom of Information Acts (one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the other for Scotland) over the previous eight months. He had made requests to well over 100 public bodies for details of their current road vehicle fleets and whether any historic information was kept in hard or soft copy formats. In particular, he noted that in today's "Information Society":

- A lot of information already available electronically;
- Commercially, virtually nothing was kept in hardcopy form;
- Informal nature of many business communications;
- Information is only transient;
- Heritage IT systems not accessible by modern systems.

The talk continued with some of the pitfalls researchers can expect to encounter with public bodies, the appeal processes and he offered to assist any other member considering using the new Acts to research in their chosen field.

LTI Vehicles (Carbodies) Visit

In August, we were guests of the LTI Vehicles at its Holyhead Road, Coventry plant for a tour of what is the only British assembly plant where volume car production is undertaken using traditional methods.

The tour started with an explanation of the company, its origins and its products. The roots of LTI's business go back to 1919 when its founder Robert Jones began a carbodying business building wooden bodies. In 1921, it moved to West Orchard in Coventry and started building metal bodies. In 1928, Carbodies moved again to the present premises at Holyhead Road. Here Carbodies made a name for itself in the automotive industry with high quality coach building on chassis such as Humber, Singer, Daimler, Jaguar, Ford and Rolls-Royce.

1946 saw a tripartite agreement to manufacture and supply taxis, mainly for the London market between Carbodies (bodies), Austin (chassis) and Mann & Overton

(sales). After prototype FX1 and FX2 designs, the Austin FX3 went into production in 1948 and over the next ten years, more than 7,000 taxis were produced. As 'convertible' work declined, Carbodies concentrated on producing complete taxis, starting with the FX4 in 1959. Carbodies was bought by Manganese Bronze Holdings plc in 1973. Then, in 1982, Carbodies took over the intellectual rights to the FX4 from British Leyland. When Manganese Bronze bought Mann & Overton in 1984, a new company, London Taxis International, was formed to manufacture and sell taxis. London Taxis International (and its predecessors) has manufactured more than 100,000 taxis with numerous model changes, including the Fairway Driver in 1992, Fairway Driver-Plus in 1993, Fairway 95 in 1994, the TXI (that replaced the FX4 in 1997) and the current model, the TXII was launched in January 2002. The current model complies with Euro 3 emissions requirements and has European Whole Vehicle Type Approval.

From being a manufacturer of taxis mainly for London, the current model has been exported to 36 countries (with significant sales to about thirty) including sixty in South Africa and 25 in Chicago. The King of Tonga has one with leather trim. It is one of two designs (the other is the Metrocab) that fully meet the requirement of Transport for London's Public Carriage Office and its Conditions of Fitness for the Construction and Licensing of Motor Taxicabs in London. LTI's marketing describes it as "the best purpose-built taxi in the world" with an exceptional safety record, good recognition, manoeuvrability and accessibility for passengers with disabilities. Current production is about 2,600 taxis per annum.

For the tour of the factory, we were joined by Eddie Walder, an engineer with considerable knowledge of the production processes. Material arrives at the factory either as sheet steel or components and is manufactured and assembled into the complete taxi under one roof. Virtually everything is undertaken using traditional manufacturing methods and the first process we saw was the press shops with different capacities of single and double action presses where pre-cut packs of palletised steel is transformed into the various body panels required for a TXII. The average age of the presses was 45 years old with three dating being pre-WW2. Manufacture of the chassis frames was brought "in-house" in December 2004, having previously been "bought-in" from a supplier.

The one area of automation in the plant is a suite of plasma cutting tools used for finishing the body pressings. We saw one machine cutting out wheelarches from a pressed sheet and another cutting out holes from the rear seat pressing.

The next process is assembly of the body, initially a series of sub-assemblies until the sides, floor, roof and



boot come together and the metal takes on some semblance of the shape of a completed taxi excluding the bonnet assembly. This is followed by a quality control processes to detect welding faults or other problems. The VIN (chassis number) is allocated at this stage of the process.

The paint process has some fourteen different stages including cleaning, etching, zinc coating, giving the steel a full-dip electrophoretic coating, electrostatic primer coat, base coat and a final lacquer coat. The electrophoretic part of this process is undertaken elsewhere, until recently at the original Jaguar factory in Coventry but now by the other local specialist motor manufacturer, LDV at Washwood Heath in Birmingham. The bodies return from their trip to Birmingham in shiny grey and then go into the paintshop where the bodies are "flattened" (to provide a key for the paint) and then give three coats – two of paint with a final coat of lacquer. Finally, the bodies are slowly baked to harden the paint.

Meanwhile chassis assembly is proceeding with the Ford DuraTorq 2.4 litre diesel engine being "dressed" and assembled to the traditional cruciform-braced chassis with the transmission specified for that taxi; there is a choice



between a Ford 5-speed synchromesh gearbox and a Jatco (Japan Automatic Transmission Company) 4-speed automatic gearbox. Front and rear axles and radiators are all fitted on the chassis line and after ninety minutes, the completed chassis is ready to be mated to the body. The latter, having left the paintshop has been fitted with its glass, wiring harnesses and part of the interior trim but still lacks the front bonnet assembly.

The final fitting out starts with the marriage of body and chassis on another slow-moving track. The front wings and bonnet are fitted, the remainder of the internal trim and then the fluids are added before the finished taxi is driven off the line, tested electrically, checked to make sure it can meet the specified 25 feet turning circle and then give a water test to ensure no leaks. The TXII comes with three standard levels of trim – bronze, silver and gold (denoted by different badges on the lid of the boot) with many minor enhancements on the silver and gold models. The main external differences are the black surround radiator grill on the bronze and metallic paint on the gold model. There are a surprising number of paint options, the standard black is joined by white, green, yellow and blue in solid colours with seven metallic paints also available on the gold trim model (or as cost

options for the bronze and silver ones).

Throughout the process there are a number of audits while there is also a Whole Vehicle Audit carried out on two completed vehicles a week. We saw VIN 159006 after its audit with the most trivial of manufacturing blemishes all highlighted and circled in chalk by its auditor. The results of each audit are fed back to the appropriate manager for remedial action and to ensure high standards of production are maintained.

VINs for the current TXII model started at number 150000 and another interesting taxi present in the factory was 158910, a yellow left-hand drive model destined for Kuwait.

LTI clearly prides itself on both the design and quality of its TXII taxi. We were all impressed with the way traditional methods of assembly have been adapted to modern work practices and with the quality of the output from the Holyhead Road plant. Our thanks to our guides, Nigel Walters and Eddie Walder, for giving us such a detailed insight of LTI's production, and to Margaret Hitchins for making the arrangements for our visit.

Salute to Symposium 2005

There were over forty people, plus the four speakers, at the Symposium. About half were in Chester for the Friday night and were either staying at The Moat House, or came to it for Ian Yearsley's Friday evening presentation of transport-related excerpts from a dozen Mitchell & Kenyon films. The others came only on the Saturday. Ian's was a fascinating display. The picture below of horse-drawn traffic on Jamaica Street, Glasgow, in 1901, is a 'still' from film no.189. It has already appeared in "Tramway Review" in a piece that Ian wrote for that magazine.



British Film Institute/Mitchell & Kenyon

Ian invited questions. These included several about the working life of horses engaged in different tasks. He reports that the following 'working lives' appear to be

typical, though one can always find exceptions:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Bus horses | - four-and-a-half to five years |
| Tram horses | - four years because of frequent starting and stopping) |
| Jobmaster horse | - three years (need for immaculate appearance) |
| Whitbread Brewery | - six to seven years with considerable variation |
| Royal coach horses | - five-and-a-half years |
| Railway horses: | |

Great Northern, Great Western and Midland
- all five years

London, Brighton & South Coast - seven years

South Eastern - six years

London & South Western - six-and-a-half years

Vestry horses - eight years (see *Newsletter* 37)

These figures come mainly from W J Gordon's 'The Horse World of London', 1893, and from the paper 'Work Horses in Victorian London' by Professor Ralph Turvey of London School of Economics. According to Keith Pearson in his 'The Douglas Horse Tramway' (Adam Gordon, 1999) these seaside tram horses worked for up to six years in the 1880s, but no comparable figures for the present day are given. Comparisons are also difficult because Douglas now retains the foals of its own mares.

On the Saturday morning, gathered in the Roodee Room the audience was first invited to the spacious windows to look down, across the Inner Ring Road, to the well-kept (but unoccupied at the time) stables used by Chester Racecourse Company.

That morning, we had Ian Yearsley on 'Unhorsing the Edwardians', followed by Geoffrey Jones on the 75th Anniversary of the Traffic Commissioners. Geoffrey's address was a curtailment of a fuller work that he has written on the history of the Traffic Commissioners. An advance copy of the full work (not yet published) was provided to each attender in very-well-produced, photocopied form by courtesy of Messrs. Bond, Pearce & Company, solicitors, Bristol, (the firm in which Geoffrey Jones had been a partner before his retirement).

We were honoured to have four out of the seven current Traffic Commissioners present on the Saturday. David Dixon, the West Midlands and Wales Commissioner, came on Friday evening as well. (It was salutary – and encouraging – to learn in lunchtime conversation, that Mr Dixon holds Public Inquiries in North Wales towns to which he travels by train to Chester, then onwards to Mold or Wrexham by the Arriva buses which terminate outside the station).

Lunch, so far as the writer is aware, was generally acclaimed to have been satisfactory and well-served by the Chester Moat House, to whom our thanks are due for the smooth functioning of all the arrangements for which the Moat House was responsible.

In the afternoon, we had two more presentations. Bert Morris, a Director of the AA Motoring Trust, paid us a rather flying visit, but gave us a very capable overview of the first century of the Automobile Association. Finally, Giles Fearnley of Blazefield Holdings Ltd, talked of his grandfather, A R Fearnley, and his uncle, R A Fearnley and their various Managerships in passenger transport;

and briefly of his own career. Many topics raised; little time to follow them up. But subsequently, Giles, who has now joined the R&RTHA as a member, has supplied your Editor with the texts of a whole series of notices posted in wartime buses in Coventry. Evocative reminders, some of which will be featuring in *Newsletter*.

A very welcome guest at the Symposium in Chester this year was Patric Cunnane, Legal Editor of "Commercial Motor". His presence has resulted in a three-page report, with photographs, in their issue of 24 November 2005. The report focuses almost entirely on the History of the Traffic Commissioners, but obviously gives credit to the Association for staging the event. The report in "Commercial Motor" draws on Geoffrey Jones' full history of the Traffic Commissioners – not yet generally published, but provided, but as explained above, provided for all delegates at the Symposium. There is to be a further instalment of Patric Cunnane's précis of the History in "Commercial Motor's" 26 January 2006 edition.

It was a thoroughly worthwhile Symposium which drew together a good many of our own members and some non-members. It attained standards fully equal to any that past Symposia have achieved; and which we must strive to equal in the future. It is hoped, (as we have done since 2002), to publish the 2005 papers in booklet form, to be available by early to mid-January. They will be sent out free to those who booked for the Symposium; they will be available at £5.00 post-free to other members. They can be ordered on the 2006 Membership Renewal form or from your Editor.

RA

Research Co-ordinator's Activities

A final report by Ian Yearsley who retired as the Association's Research Co-ordinator was published in Newsletter 42 (p.12). Some thoughts on this role are now offered by the new incumbent, A G Newman:

- An assessment of useful and reliable websites and other internet sources needs to be compiled and updated regularly. See List of 'Resources' on our own website, for a start.
- New loadings from Record Offices to the A2A internet site require regular monitoring.
- Regular contact with The National Archives (Public Record Office) and other repositories known to be strong in transport material needs to be maintained. This will highlight our presence and may open the door to all kinds of introductions and connections.
- Ensure that any business archives discovered by our members are directed to the appropriate County Record Office for safe keeping.
- The *Newsletter* has a vital role to play by keeping members aware of what other members are researching. We need regularly to update the progress of members' own particular projects and to report similar information regarding new members when they join. [A questionnaire to all members to gather this information as it stands at present has been issued. Several members have not yet replied; there is still time and information from them would be welcome].
- I have done a list of contents covering all *Newsletters* up to No.42. A print-out would be too bulky and is not offered. But members who would like it by e-mail or on disk are asked to contact Tony Newman by letter to him at 21 Ffordd Argoed, Mold, CH7 1LY or by e-mail to toekneenewman@hotmail.com
- Our 'Corporate' members need to keep us informed of on-going research projects which they are supporting, and the libraries or archives that they hold. *'Corporates' also had a questionnaire last summer (on pink or red paper). Few have yet responded; but responses would be welcome. We would like details of their archives and libraries, including to what extent they are catalogued and how pressed for space they may be. At the same time we enquire what procedures they have for a) dealing with bequests and b) rescuing deceased members' collections.*
- Members need to be encouraged to circulate material that is in draft form. In this way others will be happy to add what they know to a document which they might not have considered initiating on their own. It may also encourage others to begin work on a study of a particular theme
- Members may have memories which to them seem insignificant and familiar but to others may provide

important clues for further study. A short article in Newsletter could bring these to light.

- A general encouragement to think about getting material out of note books and circulating into the wider world. [This is one of my favourite themes].
- It may be possible to revive projects which have lapsed by reason of loss of interest or death of the progenitor.
- With a greater sharing of information about research projects there will be less chance of two people writing books simultaneously on the same subject.
- Request to be made to all known publishers of Road Transport works to notify us (via the Newsletter Editor) regularly of new titles for notice or review. (Some progress is being made – see the number and breadth of book reviews in this Newsletter).

- Compile a list of Publishers interested in road transport themes.
- Links with Universities running courses in transport studies are likely to be worthwhile. (Progress is also being made on this)
- Maintain a list of indexes which have been placed on the Internet, which are useful in Road Transport history research; e.g. London Bus Magazine and the 'Crich' Index.
- Biographies of leading figure in the industry. The Passenger Companion Working Party has material, a proportion of which will not be required in that volume. Database to be built up beginning with this information.

AGN

November 2005

Book Reviews

THE MOTORWAY ARCHIVE

Those who attended our 2004 Symposium in Derby will recall the fascinating address given by Sir Peter Baldwin KCB ex Permanent Secretary at the Department of Transport and now Chairman of the Motorway Archive Trust.

Sir Peter told us that it was back in 1995 that he began to realise that whilst much was known about railway history "I am sure that your shelves are stacked with it; mine are", there was no similar record of our nation's motorways and of those from many professions and walks of life, who together master-minded the construction of our vital motorway network. He set too to harness the support of a wide range of engineers, planners and administrators who had worked on the various schemes and the result is a massive volume of archive material, which is administered by the Trust. Two of three planned volumes have been published for the Trust by Thomas Telford Publishing, the first "Frontiers of Knowledge and Practice" in 2002 and the second "Visualisation, Policy and Administration" in 2004. Now a third volume "Building the Network: The North-West of England" is available at £20 plus £3.50 for p&p from Phillimore & Co Ltd., Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 2BG. It is also available on the Amazon website.

This volume has been written by Harry L Yeadon who became involved in the early stages of the motorway programme in 1948 under James Drake, County Surveyor and Bridgemaster of Lancashire. Later, as Superintending Engineer (Construction) of the North West Road Construction Unit, he oversaw the development of the motorways throughout the region, including of course Britain's first motorway, the Preston By-Pass, which was opened by Harold Macmillan, then Prime Minister on 5th December 1958.

Garry Turvey

THE DANGERS OF BUS RE-REGULATION

John Hibbs; Institute of Economic Affairs. (2005)
paperback 119 pp.; ISBN 0 255 36572-1; £10-00

There are two books reviewed in *Newsletter* this month that have features that are markedly in common. One deals with a very broad issue and the other with a

narrow one. This book deals with the broad issue; by contrast, "Replacing the Routemaster", reviewed in the Book Notices section, is the narrow one. Both have a strongly political theme and both are currently topical.

In "The Dangers of Bus Re-Regulation", John Hibbs, our President, sets out briefly the history of State involvement in the regulation of road passenger transport; and then deals with bus de-regulation in the 1980s. These are useful and necessary preliminaries to the advancement of his argument against the present creeping progress of re-regulation. Re-regulation meaning, in its modern form, the determination by official bodies of what services they deem are "in the public interest", and then securing the operation of the defined services usually by private companies by way of franchise.

In subsequent chapters by other writers, franchising as a Continental form of regulation is considered – and cogently argued against. Entrepreneurship and road pricing are subjects that go on to make this a very valuable book, setting out lucidly a whole series of arguments.

However, there is one deficiency in the book which your reviewer regrets. Why did bus deregulation, twenty years ago, have a political impact vastly less than its practical impact? This is not addressed. It would be exaggerating – though not hugely so – to say that John Hibbs stands out as the lone voice crying in the wilderness.

Transport Act, 1985, was passed by Parliament under the competent guidance of Nicholas Ridley, a Conservative politician. Yet one can count almost on the fingers of one hand the other Conservative politicians who understood, or even cared, what the Act was about. Buses, by the 1980s, were perceived, perhaps even more than they are at the present day, as a form of transport of last resort. Other perhaps than in London, MPs of almost any party – not just Conservatives – did not use them, nor move in circles, (except for their 'surgeries'), where anyone used them. So Transport Act, 1985, was a piece of political legislation dutifully voted for, but neither then nor subsequently, actively defended and promoted by politicians. It relied for a considerable part of its

implementation upon hostile, or at least unsympathetic, Passenger Transport Authorities and County Councils. Its opponents trumpeted the things that went wrong. Its political "supporters" were silent. Its protagonists, in practice, proved to be some, but by no means all, of the National Bus Company's managers, a tiny handful out of the then 50-odd municipal transport managers, some entrepreneurial small bus proprietors and just one or two organs of the transport press.

The 1985-1995 period, fraught with opposition, impediments, yet some notable success stories, offers good material for a full history yet to be written.

Now, a final wider comment. Your reviewer, recruited into the Civil Service in October 1950 as an Executive Officer, had the good fortune to be posted, from Day One, to Somerset House, the seat of the Board of Inland Revenue. There, for two formative years, he had a worm's eye view of the workings of our administrators; but by the nature of his work he was a very privileged worm. The principal lessons instilled into him were (a) the utter confidentiality of the Inland Revenue, (b) the importance of Parliament and (c) the impartiality of advice given to politicians. A great deal of the advice was based on precedent, involving study of similar – or broadly similar – situations in the past. Was that period fifty years ago a halcyon age? This review, and that of "Replacing the Routemaster", both rely heavily on his present perception that (a), (b) and (c) have all diminished. "The Man in Whitehall really does know best". RA

ROAD TRANSPORT ~ THE READ STORY

by Paul Heaton (P M Heaton Publishing, Abergavenny.
Tel:01873-851094) 176 pp;
252 photographs £25-00 + postage £3-00

I have never been sure I understood the meaning of the curate's egg being "good in parts", but this book is just that. Its strengths are firstly that the author has clearly had access to, and an excellent relationship with, the Read family, whose photographic archives have been thoroughly trawled. Here and in the text the personalities shine through clearly. Secondly, it gives valuable insight into how family haulage businesses are developed and change with the market and political background. There is a nice story about how George Read became a British Road Services manager (for his own depot) following nationalisation in 1949; this prevented him from developing other interests but not his wife Elizabeth, who commenced when the time was right.

This is where the problems begin. It is not a history of one business but in a sense of 12, because the founder Henry Read had 12 children and the Contents page lists 12 members of the family, each with their own activity. What follows is a series of mini-histories with accompanying photographs. A testimony perhaps to entrepreneurship, but it becomes difficult to unravel and leads to repetition. Many of these businesses were the offspring of others, and there are hints that some of them were financial devices within what was really one firm. A family tree, showing the businesses owned by the various members, would have helped clarity.

The repetition occurs when, for example, we are told several times over (because the vehicles of several family members were involved) that convoys of trucks ran at five-minute intervals, carrying coke from Port Talbot to Avonmouth, during the 1984/5 miners' strike. This was an important chapter in the Read history because Richard Read brought a successful legal action against the South Wales area of the NUM, but once is enough. It would be interesting to know more about industrial relations within the Reads' own firms - did they recognise a trade union? One suspects they might have been hard people to work for.

I counted no more than 13 pages of text out of a total of 175 and, given that the Read empire includes an ERF dealership, the photographs can be monotonous. Rather than use every available shot, which can lead to a sequence of similar (or even the same) ERF tractor units, the author could have been more selective; the saving might have allowed either some photographs to be in colour rather than entirely in monochrome, or a reduction in the cover price of £25.

Finally the work suffers from a common problem of private publication - no critical friend or proof-reader to tidy up erratic punctuation ("the Miner's strike") and the verbless sentences currently favoured by politicians ("Finally retiring in 1985 at 70 years of age").

David Holding

ROAD TRANSPORT - WALES & BORDER

ISBN 1 872006-20-5

ROAD TRANSPORT - MONMOUTHSHIRE

ISBN 1 872006-19-1

By Paul Heaton — PM Heaton Publishing,
Abergavenny (2005); both hardback; £20-00 each

The writer is known to the reviewer primarily as the author of South Wales shipping companies' histories. These have been well researched, with a detailed history and always with a full fleet list.

His move into road transport has not produced the same consistency. Whether this derives from a major concern of the Roads & Road Transport History Association – the lack of comprehensive records for many hauliers – it is hard to tell, but this could account for the varied treatment of the 12 concerns covered in these books.

Do not look for detailed histories, — even that for Lloyds of Ludlow extends to only just over a page. All cover their founding family links, some with photos of various members; a brief look at their early purchases; the early development of their businesses, many of which involved milk, farm produce, quarrying, steel or a mixture – and then the brief story up to the early years of this century or, in many cases, their demise.

In "Wales & Borders" there are fleet lists and a wide selection of illustrations for both B W Rees and Sons of Cardiff, and Roberts Transport (Ross Roadways) of Ross-on-Wye. Lloyds of Ludlow only has a full list of their preserved vehicles, a special interest of Tony Lloyd, but the illustrations cover from 1946 until today. In their introduction, there is mention of a huge expansion into Europe, with illustrations later on. A caption to one states:

"In 1971, they started operating to the Continent and for two decades were carrying out more work abroad than in the UK"

That is all – why, what traffic and where to?

Parry and Sons of St Briavels vehicles are illustrated from the 1960s to the end of the 1990s; while B M Cole of Welsh Newton only has photos of their current vehicles.

"Monmouthshire" gives a complete list of post-war vehicles for W J Clayton & Son (Kelvedon Transport Co Ltd), Rogerstone, with each vehicle's principal work noted, together with illustrations from 1923 until today.

There are no fleet lists for Clifford Llewellyn of Llangattock Lingoed; Llantilio Transport of Abergavenny; William Stedman, Talywain or Les Davies, Cross Ash, but all of them are well served by illustrations of their relatively small fleets – all except Stedman being heavily involved in the livestock trade. In particular, Llantilio Transport runs a modern Scania fleet.

Stedman's general haulage business has now been sold and they operate converted airport buses – illustrated – as "event bars" throughout South Wales and the South West.

Cliff Stephens' Transport, Griffithstown, while stretching back to the 1930s, only has a fleet list and illustrations from its resurrection in 1971 until its demise in March 2004, when it hauled the last coil from the now-closed Panteg Steelworks, its principal customer.

The real gem out of both books is D R Griffiths (E & O Griffiths), Dingestow, Monmouth, 1891 – 1995 in the Monmouthshire volume. While there is no fleet list, there are illustrations of the first page of his account book in September 1891 – 1,050 hours thrashing at 5/- per hour, pictures of the first lorry, a 1930 Willys Overland Crossley with 3-way tipper body; Sentinel and Foden steam wagons; a 1932 steam threshing machine; extracts from the accounts from 1934-1938; quarry workings; and even two Dodge tippers in the River Wye at Monmouth, being loaded with gravel. Of the 30 pages of illustrations, only two are of post-1965 vehicles.

As mentioned earlier, the lack of consistency means that even the notes accompanying the few fleet lists do not follow a common pattern. Is this again a reflection on company record keeping? Both, therefore, are rather a mixed bag, but with interesting illustrations of immediate post-war and 1950/60s vehicles and their work, as well as modern examples.

If I had to choose between them, "Monmouthshire" is the more rewarding.

John Edser, October 2005

SAMUEL LEDGARD ~ BEER AND BLUE BUSES

by Don Bate, Regent Transport Publications 2005. 312pp, numerous illustrations; ISBN 0 9523884 99; Available from the author at: 11 St Margarets Road, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 5BD: £29-95 + postage £5-00.

Samuel Ledgard was the epitome of the self-made man.

His father had been the landlord and owner of The Shepherd Inn in Pontefract Lane, Leeds, and it was this trade that the young Samuel first entered. At 15, he joined his father in bottling beer, and eventually in running The Nelson Hotel at Armley, of which he became the landlord at the age of 22. From this, he branched into outside catering, supplying both food and drink, and the marquees in which to consume them. This prompted involvement with, firstly horse-drawn, and then motorised vehicles. Perhaps inevitably, charabancs followed, and then he fell under the spell of the motor-bus.

In conjunction with John Cole and George Frederick Tate, Ledgard began to run from Otley to Leeds under the L-C-T name. It was the start for what became a major network of routes north of Leeds, expansion fuelled both by competing with others and where necessary, buying competition out. But, expansion was not restricted to the bus side. Ledgard acquired further public houses (providing more outlets for Ledgard beer), branched out into farms, (which supplied the catering business), haulage and even quarries.

After the war, the businesses, like many others faced a changed world. The haulage side was nationalised. Catering was given up, but before any further adjustments could be made to post-war realities, Ledgard died, on 4 April 1952, aged 78. His executors were determined to carry on the businesses, but economy now became the order of the day, and the following years marked a gentle decline. The quarries, farms and hostelrys were sold off one by one, leaving the bus business to continue, until it too was sold, to the West Yorkshire Road Car Co. in October 1967.

That is the bare outline. "Beer and Blue Buses" is, however, much more than a straightforward history of the Ledgard bus fleet. True, that is there, particularly enlivened by the author's experiences as an engineer for the company in the 1960s. But, there is much more, particularly on Ledgard himself, who was by all accounts an archetypal Yorkshireman. There are marvellous stories to illustrate this; an example: The last new bus bought before his death was an all-Leyland PD2/12 (for Ledgard was a Leyland man at heart). Leylands wanted £250 to paint it. Sam Ledgard had it done at Otley depot for £165.

The firms acquired over the years all receive a chapter on their history; there are details of routes, tickets, timetables; there are reminiscences and even poetry. Photographic coverage is extensive, both in monochrome and colour, and the book itself is sumptuously produced, complete with a bookmark.

Faults are few. There are two small slips in the ticket section. The Ledgard haulage fleet receives limited mention, although arguably this is outside the scope of the book. The difficulties the business faced after Ledgard's death might have merited further exploration – perhaps these were brought about by the impact of punitive death duties. But, don't let these put you off. If you ever knew the Ledgard blue buses, Don Bate's account is essential reading.

David Harman

WALLS' ICE CREAM (FAMOUS FLEETS VOLUME EIGHT)

Alan Earnshaw, David Hayward and Chris Stevens
Kendal, Nostalgia Road Publications, (2005), 52 pp., £7.95

This 50-page booklet is heavily illustrated with over 100 pictures, a few of which are in colour, and is produced on thick, glossy paper. It tells the story of the evolution of Wall's transport fleet, or at least that part devoted to moving ice cream, with an occasional reference to facilities shared with the meat division. For the founder of the business, Richard Wall, commenced in 1786 as a meat pie and sausage maker and retailer in St James's Market, London. It was not till about 1922 that the firm went into ice cream, to win sales in the summer when the meat pie and sausage trade was slack. This marriage of convenience was torn asunder in 1955 though why is not explained. The book has a brief history of the main changes in products sold, demand conditions and the firm's structure, as they affected the firm's policy on transport.

For instance, the move from hard to soft ice cream in the 1960s caught Walls on the wrong foot. They recovered

quite quickly, and in 1964 bought shares in its rival and two years later bought out the Mr Whippy brand from Fortes. The soft ice cream vans needed a heavy generator and Walls' existing vans struggled with this addition, necessitating a search for a more appropriate chassis, until a power take off on the engine of Bedford CA and CF models allowed the weighty generator to be dispensed with. The extent of Walls involvement in mobile sales is shown in their ownership of about 8,500 pedal powered trikes in 1938 and in 1970 about 1,600 vans, though by then ownership of home freezers and booming supermarket sales suggested alternative marketing strategies and many vans were sold to franchised independent retailers. The details of chassis used and whose bodies were favoured are in here as are details of their trunker fleet which included AEC Mammoth Majors and Mandators, Seddons and later Scania's. The booklet is accessibly written and based on extensive oral history of ex-drivers. As such, there are no sources or bibliography and indeed no index or contents page. That said it is reasonably priced, full of details of van chassis and a delight for ice cream van enthusiasts.

John Armstrong
Thames Valley University

Book Notices

Book Notice: (Newsletter adopts the convention of "reviewing" books that publishers have supplied to the Association for review, and of "noticing" books that members have purchased, and felt to deserve notice).

THE LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS

- THE HISTORY OF WREFORD'S TRANSPORT

Tony Deeson; Northampton : Wreford's Transport, [2004]
43pp. + [12] pp. of illustrations; £9.99 from the firm

In these days of takeovers and closures and a haulage industry increasingly oppressed by costs and legislation it is good to share in the celebration of a firm which has reached its centenary and, moreover, marked it with a worthwhile history. It is in many ways a familiar story, of hard work and long hours, with the founder's wife dealing the clerical work of the business. The firm strongly opposed nationalisation : Wreford's response to what is castigated by the author as 'this stupid Act' was to develop a warehousing complex, from which they carried out local distribution within the 25-mile radius, (It is worth noticing that Wreford's retained a small number of horse and cart units for local work until 1947.) A good selection of illustrations shows the development of the fleet and its contract work for such as Cadburys, Castrol, Airflow Streamlines' Ltd, Avon Cosmetics and LEP Air Services.

Richard Storey

HIGH AND MIGHTY

— THE DANGEROUS RISE OF THE SUV

Keith Bradsher; New York : Public Affairs, [2003]
paperback 488 pp.; illust.;
ISBN 1 58648 203 3; £13.99

We would not expect to read book about, say, sports cars in these columns, so why notice one on this particular model, the SUV or sport utility vehicle? Justification lies in its significance as a phenomenon of the global auto industry,

as an inherently dangerous addition to the traffic mix, especially in towns, where many would consider it to have no place, and as an unjustifiably over-powered, over-consuming and over-polluting vehicle.

Although Toyota and Land Rover feature, this is an essentially American study, which is appropriate, as it was an act of retaliation in international trade, the imposition of a 25% duty on light commercial vehicles, which gave America the protective boundaries behind which the SUV would thrive, once the concept had evolved beyond the Jeep Wagoneer. The late Lord Trotman, the English Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ford, strongly supported that company's production of the SUV, seeing it as 'a good formula for the customer' and commenting on the safety issue that a large rock would inevitably win if it hit a smaller one.

The value-added significance for the motor industry world-wide combined with the tendency for the affluent to exhibit their affluence in their choice of automobile, irrespective of desirability in a wider context, and resulted in a vehicle which has serious implications for fuel consumption, pollution and the over-crowding of the urban traffic scene. A comfortably crew-cabbed four-wheel-drive pick-up truck, on a uni-frame 4x4 may well be a useful tool-of-the-trade for farmers, tree-cutters and site supervisors; when turned into an alternative for an up-market saloon for family use, its lack of fitness for the purpose is glaringly obvious. The merits and demerits of various models and the significance, even the existence, of the problem are debated frequently in the press, but it takes a book of this size and detail to examine the evolution of a vehicle type which has given rise to so much controversy. Let the writer record that this book reflects his views, which are not necessarily those of the Association or its Board.

Richard Storey

REPLACING THE ROUTEMASTER

Edited by Dean Godson (Policy Exchange Ltd, London, October 2005, Tel. 020 7340 2650); paperback; 85pp; ISBN 0 9547527 7 5. Price £10-00

Without going into technical details, the Routemaster is, to all intents and purposes, the traditional London bus – a red double-decker with open rear platform and carrying a conductor. Apart from an intended survival on two 'tourist' routes across central London, the Routemaster is scheduled to be finally withdrawn in December 2005.

A book with chapters by several respected writers including Simon Jenkins, Dean Godson, Andrew Gilligan, Zac Goldsmith and Colin Cramphorn, argues cogently against the Routemaster passing away without replacement. However, at this point your reviewer needs to explain why this matter that seems to be pre-eminently concerned with current affairs, politics and pressure groups, but scarcely with history, is pertinent to this R&RTHA Newsletter. The answer is twofold.

Firstly, at our 2002 Symposium "Learning from History", Kevin Hey spoke on "The Lesson that History Forgot – one man buses: a necessary evil?" Anyone buying "Replacing the Routemaster" could also usefully re-read Kevin Hey's lecture, published in the R&RTHA's booklet of 2002 Symposium papers.* London's Routemasters – until their demise about the time that this Newsletter appears – have been the significant surviving example of a fleet of double-manned buses.

Secondly, a page or two earlier in this Newsletter, your reviewer commented rather acidly on the lack of interest in buses shown by Members of Parliament. He does not take back his words; but he does exonerate one notable MP, Kate Hoey, the Labour member for Vauxhall (a constituency that includes Waterloo Station). She has written a chapter in "Replacing the Routemaster" on "The Horror of the Bendi" which your reviewer finds excellent. OK; it may betray that Kate Hoey is not such a regular user of buses as to possess an Oyster Card; she has to go to the bendy-bus stop to feed the pavement machine with a cash fare – and the machine, of course, is out of order and the driver does not take cash fares. She then experiences the on-bus travails of the regular, as well as the unfamiliar, traveller in our cosmopolitan metropolis. And she writes clearly and well about them.

Finally, although your reviewer is not, in the end, wholly persuaded by the book that the Routemaster could, or even should, have been 'saved' at this eleventh hour, he is persuaded that its demise is based neither on economic reasoning nor on lack of public support for the two-man bus. Its end has come because "The Man in Whitehall really does know best". And this is why the review of John Hibbs' book, a page or so earlier, opened with the remark that these two books "have features that are markedly in common". Both ask whether "the Man in Whitehall" has become the best judge of the public good; they concede that he is frequently the victor. RA

* 2002 Symposium papers are still available - see under "Association Matters"

HISTORY OF THE TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Ian P Ramsay Transport Association (Aqua House, 30-32 High Street, Epsom KT19 8AH), 2005. 14pp.

This is a fully detailed, chronological narrative of the development of this organisation of hauliers, the objects of which are mutual help and operational co-operation. The Transport Association is now a corporate member of the R&RTHA.

Notwithstanding certain aspects of syntax and punctuation, which do not always make for an easy read, it is worth persevering in order to learn more about this unique body of independent hauliers, small in numbers in relation to the size of the industry, but highly focused on its chosen objectives. The TA's history is unfolded in the wider context of the road haulage scene and a particularly interesting feature of the book is the continuous record of changes of membership, culminating in a list of members as at January 2005. Chapter 2 deals with its origins in the post-war Transport Arrangement, which had its roots in the wartime experience of a wide geographical spread of operators, and which led to the formation of T A Realisation Ltd: 39 companies united into one and offered as a single unit for voluntary nationalisation. To sum up, an unusual history and one well worth reading.

Richard Storey

Letter to the Editor

THE LAST WORD ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

I draw attention to a paragraph on the leader page in the September 2005 issue of 'Focus', the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) magazine:

"Finally, we will be launching a training programme in schools, aimed at Key Stage 3 (11-14), providing greater assistance for students and teachers and playing a leading role in promoting the future of our profession"

John Edser

The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue

Sung by Kate Harley. Written and sung by Harry Clifton at the London Music Halls

Published by B. Williams, 11 Paternoster Row Price 2/6d

Coloured engraving on Cover:

Young man in riding boots, white breeches, yellow waistcoat, black topcoat with red pocket-handkerchief, grey top hat and riding crop.

In the background is a dark haired young lady dressed in blue holding a parasol, a policeman in uniform with a top hat, against a back drop of exhibition buildings and a horse drawn omnibus with the letters 'BITION visible on the side.

At the young man's feet, in the gravel, are the words 'Try Hooper Bartree's Soap Powder'.

British Library Shelf Number H1790

- Anonymous Vocal Music A-H

Date stamped 'British Museum 23AP63'.

1. From a village away in Leicestershire, to London here I came,
To see the Exhibition and all places of great fame
But what I suffered since I came I now will tell to you,
How I lost my heart and senses too, through a dark girl dressed in blue.

Chorus:

She was a fine girl fol de riddle I do, a charmer fol de riddle eh!

2. 'Twas on a Friday morning, the first day of August
When on that day I ever think, my head feels ready to bust
I went in a sixpenny omnibus to the Exhibition of sixty-two
On a seat by the right hand side of the door sat a dark girl dressed in blue.
3. When we arrived in the Brompton Road the lady looked so strange
The conductor said, "sixpence ma'am", said she "I have no change,
I've nothing less than a five pound note, whatever shall I do?"
Said I, "allow me to pay." "Oh thank you sir" said the dark girl dressed in blue.
4. We chatted and talked as we onward walked, about one thing or the other.
She asked me too - oh wasn't it kind? - if I had a father or mother.
"Oh yes," says I, "and a grandmother too, but pray miss what are you?"
"Oh I'm chief engineer in a milliner's shop." Says the dark girl dressed in blue.

5. We walked about for an hour or two, thro' the building near and far,
Till we came to the grand refreshment room; I went straight up to the bar.

She slipped in my hand a five-pound note, I said "What are you going to do?"

"Oh don't think it strange, I must have change," said the dark girl dressed in blue.

6. I called a waiter and handed him the note and said, "Please change me that."
The waiter bowed and touched his hair, for this waiter wore no hat.
In silver and gold five pounds he brought, I gave him coppers a few,
And the change of the note I then did give to the dark girl dressed in blue.
7. She thanked me and said, "I must away, farewell till we meet again.
For I've to go to Pimlico to catch the Brighton train."
She quickly glided from my sight and soon was lost to view.
I turned to leave when by my side stood a tall man dressed in blue.
8. The tall man said, "Excuse me sir, I'm one of the 'X' Division.
That note was bad, my duty is to take you on suspicion."
Said I, "For a lady I obtained the change." He said, "Are you telling me true?
Where's she live? What's her name?" Say I, "I don't know; she was a dark girl dressed in blue."
9. My story they believed, they thought I'd been deceived,
But they said I must hand back the cash.
I thought 'twas a sin as I gave them the tin, and away went five pounds smash.
So all young men take my advice, be careful what you do
When you make the acquaintance of ladies strange, especially a dark girl dressed in blue.

Another song bound into the same volume has an engraving of Harry Clifton who resembles the young man shown on the cover of this song. Other popular songs performed by Harry Clifton include 'Polly Perkins of Paddington Green' and 'Lanigan's Ball'

Transcript made May 2001, by A.G. Newman from the original at the British Library

Kelly's Post Office Guide to London, 1862 devotes Chapter XVIII to the International Exhibition, in Cromwell Road., detailing the building, the formidable range of countries contributing to the Exhibition (some of which recall names now nearly forgotten: Zollverien, Hanse Towns, Prince Edward's Island, Hayti, Ceylon, Natal, Ionian Islands and Siam).

Then are listed various trades, including the Carriage Department "containing almost every kind of cart of carriage used here or on the Continent; — wheels with weld-less steel tyres and chain tyres; velocipedes, chairs, dog-carts, light carts for trade purposes".

The Agricultural Department is already showing the advance of steam driven agricultural machinery: "Steam cultivators, ploughs, scarifiers, pulverizers, grubbers, harrows. Steam engines, steam elevators, winnowing machines, trumellers, root cutters and pulpers, crushing and grinding mills, threshing machines, apparatus for washing and steaming roots".

A bus fare of sixpence to the Exhibition would have been reasonable if the young gentleman from Leicestershire boarded the bus at Kings Cross Station, Exorbitant if he boarded, say, in Piccadilly. The prompt appearance of a policeman at his side is explained elsewhere in Kelly's in the section on "Criminals and Police". Kelly's makes a strong defence of London, saying "It is a gross fallacy to speak of capital cities being the sinks of crime" London had one policeman for every 7.4 of the criminal class. The "criminal class" comprised 1 in 115 of the population of

England and Wales as a whole (in 1860), but in London only 1 in 183. Much higher ratios were presented in "the seats of cotton and linen manufacture – Manchester, Blackburn &c – 1 in 131; in the seats of small and textile fabrics – Norwich, Nottingham &c – it is 1 in 126.7; in pleasure towns – Brighton, Gravesend and Ramsgate, it is 1 in 103.8; in commercial ports – Liverpool, Hull, Southampton and Shields – it is 1 in 99.9; in towns depending on agricultural districts – Ipswich, Lincoln and Bridgewater — it is 1 in 91.5; and in the seats of hardware manufacture, Birmingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton – the proportion is 1 in 67.8". The criminal classes in the Metropolis (in 1860) were 13,846, of whom 6,940 were prostitutes. Of the 99 murders in England and Wales, there were only 4 in the metropolis. Of crimes detected, the authors of one half escaped.

Ed.RA

Opening of New Road at Brymbo

From "The Leader", Wrexham, 18 January 1924

[Readers may care to contemplate the materials used, some of the figures given, the time scale and the sources of finance mustered for this stretch of utilitarian road]

The opening of New Nant Road, Brymbo, took place on Monday afternoon, and the ceremony was witnessed by a large company.

The new road is a distance of 562 yards, making the total length of the road 710 yards, and is situated in the parish of Broughton. It runs from the bottom of the Lodge to the G.W.Rly. station, Brymbo. 37,948 tons of slag were removed by the men during the construction of the road, and 2,000 tons of limestone had been used. The tarmac covered an area of 5,260 square yards and the concrete posts numbered 532; 632 curb stones were also used, together with 30,000 bricks and about 100 tons of coal, and four miles of fencing wire.

The maximum number of men employed on the road was fifty and the minimum six, making an average of twenty-four each day. The number of shifts worked by the men totalled 13,504.

The total cost amounted to £10,648. Between £2,100 and £2,200 was received from the Government and £1,250 from the District Council. The remainder was covered by the Brymbo Steel Co Ltd.

Before calling upon Mr J.S. Hollings to open the road, Mr E Stuart Clark, chairman of the Wrexham District Council Highways Committee, said that the main object in constructing the road was to relieve unemployment in the locality, which was great at the time. The Government Unemployment Grants Committee had made a grant towards the cause, and the Brymbo Steel Co came forward and gave great support. The balance came out of the rates. The Brymbo Steel Co would benefit by having a little more elbow room for their works and the public would have an excellent road of an easy gradient, in place of a tortuous, steep and narrow one. He wished to thank the Steel Co and Mr Hollings, the managing director. One

portion of their work was to provide the materials used in the construction of the road. Anyone could see that they had "played the game"

The problem the local authorities had to face in the future was a very grave one and it was difficult to see how they were to carry on unless some means were available for the maintenance and construction of roads in that district. When the motor taxes were imposed, it was stated that all the money would be devoted to the roadways, but up to the present Brymbo district had received a very small share. He hoped that the landowners would help the public authorities. The feeling in the past had been that the public authorities had had to pay the last penny. It was the wrong spirit and he hoped that there would be more co-operation.....

[After the road had been opened, there was an adjournment to the Steel Works Library Room, where refreshments were served]. Mr Geo. Vernon Price, clerk to the Wrexham Rural District Council, stated that the question of constructing the New Nant Road was first suggested two years ago by the Brymbo Steel Co, as a relief for unemployment. Owing to there being so many Government Councils, District Councils etc., through which the suggestion had to be carried the scheme was nearly abandoned. There were many restrictions by the Unemployment Grants Committee, and they made the scheme nearly impossible. The Parish Councils had to be consulted as they objected to the cost of the road coming from the rates. He thanked Mr Rees Evans, the Highway Surveyor, for the work he had done and the Brymbo Steel Co for the way they had met the District Council.

It was also stated by Mr Hollings that the Steel Co proposed to give three acres of land to the Parish Council to provide a recreation ground for the children.

Motor-cars, gee-gees and bus tickets

Last year, at an Association business meeting, there was discussion on the book *Drive on! A Social History of the Motor Car* by LJK Setright (reviewed by Paul Jefford in *Newsletter* 37), and the question was raised: "Was LJK Setright related to the Setright who made bus ticket machines?"

I thought not and said so, but I was wrong. After LJK Setright died on 7 September 2005, the newspaper obituaries made clear that he *was* related.

Leonard John Kensell Setright was born in 1931, the son of Australian émigrés, Lena and Henry Roy Setright. He studied law at university but hated it, and became a professional musician instead (he was an accomplished jazz clarinettist). Financial stringency led him into motoring journalism and it was here that he made his mark. His work in *Car* magazine broke new ground in a field that had become stale and unadventurous. His reviews were entertaining, idiosyncratic, eccentric even, but above all, authoritative, even if the automotive machinery under scrutiny was well beyond the pockets of callow youths such as myself.

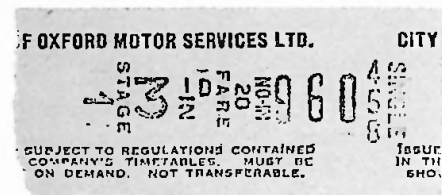
LJK's knowledge and interest in things mechanical stemmed from his childhood, for his father was a precision engineer. However, strangely enough, it was the horse, and not the motor vehicle, that attracted Setright senior to London in the 1920s. In Australia, he had worked with George (later Sir George) Julius in developing the racecourse totalisator, a device central to the notion of 'pooled betting'. This was then gaining rapid acceptance. Pooled betting, or the *pari-mutuel* had been devised in France in 1867 by a celebrated Parisien, Joseph Oller. In conventional betting, punters bet individually against the bookmaker. In pooled betting, they bet against each other; the 'pool' of stake-money being distributed to those backing the winning horse(s). The recording of bets, calculation of odds and winnings – and the printing of betting slips were all handled by the totalisator, a complex machine, and Julius's company, Automatic Totalisators Ltd. became pre-eminent in their manufacture.

By the mid-1920s legislation was being drafted in Britain, to permit pooled betting. The Racecourse Betting Act became law in August 1928 and the Racecourse Betting Control Board (after 1961, the Horserace Totalisator Board – the "Tote") was set up to administer it. This prompted Automatic Totalisators and Setright to move here in order to design and supply equipment to British racecourses.

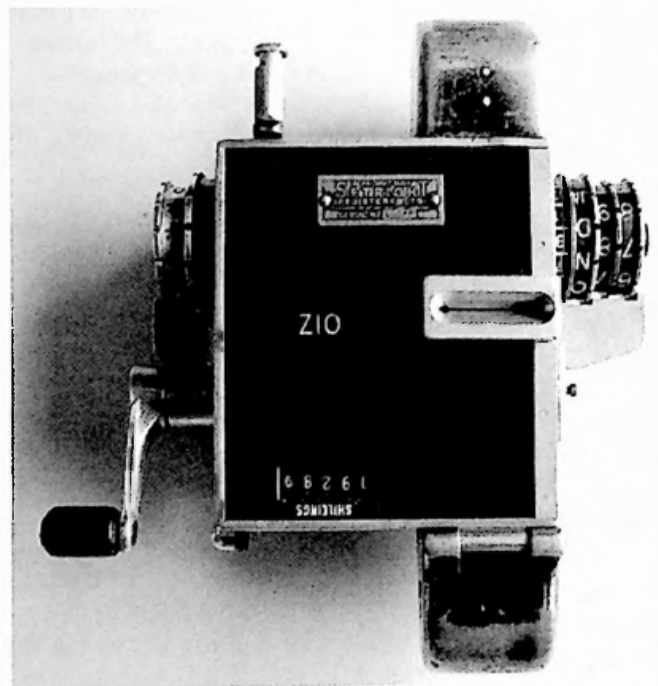
At around the same time, mechanisation was being considered in quite a different field. The larger bus and tram operators wanted to replace the bell punch ticket system by some form of portable ticket printing machine, primarily for reasons of economy. Setright now collaborated with another fellow Australian, George Bethell of Automatic Ticket Issuers Ltd., in the design of the "Trambus" ticket machine. This was tried by the London Public and the London General among others in 1927, but did not prove successful. In 1931, Setright struck out on his own, forming Setright Registers Ltd. to make ticket issuing machines, incorporating ideas from the

"Trambus" and from the totalisator betting-slip printers. His first model, the "insert" Setright received a cautious welcome, but by the mid-1930s had been adopted by several major firms – the East Kent Road Car Co., Maidstone & District Motor Services, and the Scottish Motor Traction (SMT) group.

Although Henry Setright died in 1942, the excellence of his engineering ideas continued to be applied at Setright Registers. In 1946, the roll ticket register was patented, the design having been drawn up to the specification of the Tilling Group at some point during or before the War. The first production machines were put in service by Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services in 1948. The Setright "Speed" as it was known, became a best seller, used by most of the large bus operators and many small ones too, both at home and abroad. It was in general use for over 40 years.



Most members will recognise the Setright Speed ticket, and our President, John Hibbs ought to recognise the insert Setright machine illustrated below as an old friend. It is no. Z10, supplied new to Corona Coaches of Sudbury in 1958.



Setright Registers Ltd. was sold to Lamson Industries in 1974. Its products and name were gradually dropped, but the Setright machine may still be found in use with small bus operators even today.

David Harman

Thomas Cook Archives

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Thomas Cook's first continental tour, and the company has just announced that its archives section, formerly well-known to researchers at the Berkeley Street, London, office, has been re-established at its Peterborough headquarters. There is a full-time archivist, Paul Smith, and facilities for researchers as well as a display of historic artifacts. The collection includes handbooks, brochures and catalogues from 1845 to the present day, railway timetables from 1873 to the present, and travellers' guidebooks from 1874 onwards. There is also film material of the 1950s and 1960s when the company had its own film unit, and many photographs and documents.

One curious feature was that the company for many years held its own Road Service Licences for its tours in the United Kingdom, despite not owning any vehicles. Records of road transport go back at least to 1863 when its first Swiss tour took place, an event re-enacted, complete with a horse-drawn brake and passengers in Victorian costume, in 1963.

A new book, 'Thomas Cook, a holidaymaker', by Jill Hamilton, has just been published by Sutton Publications in hardback price £20, and a paperback version at £8.95 is due to appear in February. This is a biography of Thomas Cook, rather than a company history; Piers Brandon's 'Thomas Cook, 150 years of popular tourism' (Secker & Warburg, 1991) gives far more about the company and its operations, as does 'The Business of Travel', by W Fraser Rae, published by Thos. Cook & Son, 1891. For an overall picture of the travel industry, 'ABTA, the first fifty years', published in 2000 by the Association of British Travel Agents, is a valuable source.

Anyone wanting to use the Thomas Cook archives is invited to contact Paul Smith, company archivist, Thomas Cook UK Ltd, Company Archives, The Thomas Cook Business Park, 15-16 Coningsby Road, Peterborough PE3 8SB. Phone 01733 417350, fax 01733 416255, or email Paulsmith@thomascook.com

IV

Editorial

Right at the start, your Editor thanks the numerous contributors to Newsletter over the past year, and hopes that this issue will provide all readers with some congenial and some thought-provoking reading matter.

Those who savour the unusual may find that the article on Bath chairs not only focuses attention on this conveyance, but also provides fodder for our members interested in street furniture – iron plates set into the kerb to mark the recognised stances for bath chairs plying for hire. Those with even wider perspectives and alert to current affairs may notice that one of the Bath Chair Driver's Licences referred to a Police Constable as an "Officer of the Borough".

Quite a lot of space is devoted to "Association Matters", but those who are able to get to the Association's meetings do usually find plenty to keep them interested. The visit to Carbody, the September Business Meeting in Coventry and the Symposium in Chester are all covered in this issue.

Book Reviews and Book Notices are plentiful. With luck, Newsletter will reach you just in time for you to persuade your nearest and dearest to get to the bookshops, or on the phone or internet to buy several works for your Christmas stocking. Your Editor is grateful for the array of different reviewers now available to him. With the Book Notices, the reviewer has brought the book to the attention of the Editor. With the Book Reviews, it is the Editor who has asked a reviewer to consider a book supplied by a publisher.

Two items in this 'Christmas' issue might seem appropriate when your children or grandchildren cluster at your knee and beg you to read them a story or tell them a tale. For pre- or early-teenage children, "Memories-Grand Opera" possibly presents an instructive account of how children used to be brought up; for teenagers about to venture into the wide world, try "The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue", a most pertinent warning of the predicaments they may get into if they catch the eye of an attractive girl in an omnibus.

Honour for our President

Fellow academics, members of both Houses of Parliament and colleagues from passenger transport and beyond, some of whom had been his students, gathered at the Institute of Economic Affairs on 31st October to honour Professor John Hibbs OBE.

An evening panel discussion, featuring Dr Eamonn Butler, Director, Adam Smith Institute; Ben Colson, Managing Director, Go West Travel Ltd; Professor Stephen Glaister CBE Imperial College, London; Dr Paul Kevill, Author; Dr

Oliver Knipping, Institute of Free Enterprise, Zagreb and Dr Graham Parkhurst, University of West England, traced the fortunes of the bus industry since de-regulation under the Transport Act 1985. All the speakers paid tribute to Professor Hibbs, widely recognised as the intellectual force behind liberalisation. In his response Professor Hibbs recalled the many debates which preceded the introduction of the Act, the strong opposition at that time from within the industry and outside and the determination of Nicholas Ridley the Secretary of State for

Transport. Members of the audience ensured that the presentations were followed by lively debate with proceedings being wound up by John Blundell, Director General, IEA. He warmly endorsed earlier tributes to Professor Hibbs whose intellectual contributions to the work of the IEA, including his latest publication "The

Dangers of Bus Re-regulation" covered a longer time span than any others he could recall.

GT

"The Dangers of Bus Re-regulation" is reviewed earlier in this Newsletter.

Publications and Periodicals to keep in mind

The "Bath Chair" article in this *Newsletter* was originally published in the *Revenue Journal of Great Britain*, the magazine of the Revenue Society of Great Britain. The Revenue Society caters for collectors of all manner of revenue stamps and licences – thus including Bath Chair licences. The Society has, for example, published a useful (and well-produced) A4-size booklet on "Great Britain Road Tax Discs 1921-2000". Although this is understood now to be out of print, it is a source of information of which some of our members may care to be aware.

The booklet traces the licensing of Hackney Carriages in London back to 1637. It illustrates an Inland Revenue Licence, issued in 1889, at a charge of two guineas, for a Carriage "with four or more wheels and fitted to be drawn by two or more Horses or Mules, or to be drawn or propelled by mechanical power" (Note this alternative). The booklet then goes on to its primary subject – the Road Tax Discs introduced in 1921 – dealing with these in great detail from the point of view of the collector interested in variants.

Particulars of the Revenue Society of Great Britain are to be found on its website or by contact with its Hon Secretary, Tony Hall 57 Brandles Road, Letchworth SG6 2JA

Our corporate member, the Post Office Vehicle Club, has just announced publication, in collaboration with British Bus Publishing, of *The Mailvan Handbook*, described as "a fully illustrated record of the different types of mailvans and other vehicles operated by Royal Mail and its predecessors over the past 25 years" 112 pages, 140 photographs. Price £14.00, incl. UK postage and packing. Cheques to Post Office Vehicle Club at 124 Shenstone Avenue, Stourbridge DY8 3EJ.

Some members will be aware, but many will not be, that our corporate member The Railway & Canal Historical Society has, for several years now, been embarked upon a Bibliography of the History of Inland Waterways, Railways and Road Transport in the British Isles. An Annual Supplement has just been published in November 2005. In the Introduction, Grahame Boyes reviews its scope and whether it seems to be achieving its purpose. His opening comment on 'Books and pamphlets' is that comprehensive coverage is "substantially achieved for inland waterways and railway history, but road transport is probably less well covered". The coverage of 'periodical literature' is more selective, aiming to cover articles (at least a page in length) with some originality of content that adds to previously published writings. There is a deficiency in coverage of local historical journals, which are not reported or seen. A list is then offered of the (mainly railway) societies where R&CHS have no contributors covering their journals for the purpose of the Bibliography. Among the societies listed is our corporate member, the Transport Ticket Society – a failing that your Editor must take seriously to heart, though confessing that, in the TTS, it is far easier to find readers for historical material than it is to find writers and researchers to provide it. Happily, the R&RTHA is not on the defaulters' list. The published Symposium papers have been carefully combed and noted, and one or two articles from *Newsletter* have been picked out. For interested *Newsletter* readers (or for any potential volunteer reporters to the bibliography) the e-mail address of Grahame Boyes, is g.boyes1@btinternet.com

Centenaries and mellow fruitfulness

The following electric tramway systems in Britain opened in 1905: All listed are municipal except those marked *.

Radcliffe (worked by Bury), Exeter	April
Walthamstow	June
Stockport, Mansfield & District*, Bournemouth,	
Leamington & Warwick*	July
Leith, Erith	August
Falkirk*	October
Perth, Lincoln, Belfast, Heywood (ran its own steam	
trams but electric operation was by Rochdale,	
Bury and Manchester)	November
Dundee, Broughty Ferry & District*	December

Hastings Tramways* also opened in 1905.

And the following electric tramways opened in 1906:

Gosport & Fareham*	January
Dartford	February
South Shields	March
Burton & Ashby*	July
Torquay*	October
Jarrow & District*	November
Leyton (London)	December

It will be interesting to see how many of these places have events or exhibitions commemorating these centenaries.

Details from Garcke's *Manual of Electrical Undertakings*, 1919-20 edition.

Ian Yearsley, FCILT FInstTT

Memories

by Roger Atkinson

GRAND OPERA

The War coincided precisely with my last six years at school; so only once did I ever go on a school outing. But it was a memorable one – a visit to the opera. In 1941/2, I spent the school year, as a boarder, at Dunnow Hall, near Slaidburn, a few miles from Clitheroe; an idyllic year actually.

However, let us begin at the beginning. Diligent readers may recall from *Newsletter No.41*, pp.18-19 that my guardian, Mrs Mann, lived in Birmingham. Mrs Mann's journey each week to Wolverhampton to see my mother became too much of a strain, so she arranged for my mother to move to a small nursing home in Gillott Road, Edgbaston, run by a Mrs Gray; and I was to stay at Mrs Gray's for the 1941 Christmas holidays.

Remember that after the German occupation of Holland, Belgium and the non-Vichy part of France in May/June 1940, there had been a not unreasonable fear of invasion. The government, under DORA (the Defence of the Realm Act), had quickly imposed a Removal of Direction Signs Order, which meant that all signposts, railway station nameboards and even milestones, disappeared. I was not, by then, sound on English geography. I only knew vaguely that Clitheroe was somewhere in the north, and quite well that Birmingham was in the Midlands. As my occasions for travel grew, the wartime prohibitions on displaying place names did not help one little bit.

Come Christmas, three of us from Dunnow were travelling to Birmingham, on 17 December I think. We caught the train from Clitheroe. (I digress here; I have no recollection of changing stations in Manchester. Many years later I had this explained to me by a retired British Rail stationmaster. We will have changed at Blackburn, not Manchester, to the Colne to Euston through carriages, which were pulled circumferentially round Manchester, and at Stockport, were hitched on to a Manchester (London Road) to Euston express. At Stockport, we will have changed on to the immediately following Manchester – Birmingham express).

All went well until after Wolverhampton. Our train was stopped at Dudley Port, because the air raid sirens were wailing, and moving trains were visible, favoured and vulnerable targets for bombers. We were backed, as far as far I can now work out, on to the branch line to Dudley, and we stayed in a tunnel. Dim lighting, more and more smoke, and no idea how long we were going to be there. One of the boys I was with did not like me, and I did not like him; so we started to fight. It was a corridor train, and we were able to go, in the dark, up and down the train, battering each other and spilling blood (mainly mine), until some interfering passenger finally stopped us. Eventually, the "all clear" went and we got into New Street fully two hours late, I greeted Mrs Mann with a torn shirt and blood all over me. She took it in her stride and we caught a number 7 bus — (see T B Maund's letter in *Newsletter No.40*, p.16, re Birmingham's No.7). And I was duly lodged at Mrs Gray's.

Mrs Gray's son was just my age, and we got on well together. But that was not wonderful for the peace and quiet of the nursing home. Mrs Gray took us one afternoon to see the Olson and Johnson film, "Hellzapoppin", and I was fascinated by seeing a tram, outside the cinema, showing "Alum Rock" as its destination. We liked "Hellzapoppin", so Mrs Gray sent us to see it again the next afternoon as well.

As a child, one does not always credit adults with the intelligence and guile that some of them actually possess, so I accepted with innocence Mrs Mann's edict that I should go back to Dunnow on 30 December, long before the start of the new term. Only later did it occur to me that she was killing two birds with one stone: (a) restoring peace and quiet at Mrs Gray's and (b) avoiding my having to travel back to school on the same train as the boy who had caused me notable damage coming down.

I spent two or three days working on the Dunnow Farm, helping the woodman felling trees or holding sheep as each foot was scraped and dipped in an anti-foot-rot liquid by the shepherd. There was no Bank Holiday in England on New Year's Day in those days, but there was a Royal Proclamation reported in "The Times":

The Treasury announces that a proclamation was approved by the King yesterday that Thursday, January 1, shall be observed as a "close holiday" in all banks in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This step has been taken solely in order to enable the banks to attend without interruption to the special work of that day, and the day will not be a general holiday for the public.

Nonetheless, for a couple of days at the weekend which followed New Year, I went to my cousin Lily's in Shelf; or strictly, it was to Aunt Amanda's. Lily was the one who brought the money in, slipped up to the butcher's for some black market meat to see that I was heartily fed, and who looked after the house. Aunt Amanda spent all day in her rocking chair. My journey was by train from Clitheroe to Hellifield, down to Shipley, then to Bradford, and finally up on the bus to Shelf. The trains gave poor connections and were expensive. But I travelled that way because I knew so little about geography, trains were the recognised way to make any lengthy journey, and I had not yet been to the opera.

It was some time in February (1942) that Miss Williamson, our schoolmistress, said that she was going to take about eight of us to see *Madame Butterfly*. We were going to go to the Grand Theatre in Burnley. Do not giggle. In those days, provincial theatres flourished, and Burnley's Grand Theatre was quite capable of mounting a good opera.

We had no pocket money at all to spend; and apart from Vimto and a bun, with rationing and shortages there would not have been much to spend it on anyway. So Miss Williamson had to spin out the time. The morning bus from Slaidburn had us in Clitheroe far sooner than we need have been, and although it took another hour on the Burnley, Colne & Nelson Joint Transport Committee bus

to Burnley, she wisely did not disembark us from the bus when it stopped opposite the Grand Theatre, but kept us all on to Burnley Cattle Market – a wholly unsheltered bus station that was primitive by even the very lowest 1940s standards.

I have no idea how Miss Williamson kept the other seven boys and girls occupied for nearly an hour. I was simply and utterly transfixed by the Cattle Market. Never in my wildest dreams had I seen such a variety of buses and liveries: Accrington Corporation, Rawtenstall Corporation, Todmorden Joint Omnibus Committee and the Barley Omnibus Company, quite apart from the ubiquitous BCNJTC and Ribble buses. Conductresses perched perilously on one foot on the slippery dumb-irons as they wound the indicators through an array of Lancashire place names utterly outside my grasp.

Then, just before Miss Williamson came to drag me to the opera, a Hebble came in and wound its indicator to 15 LEEDS via Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Shelf and Odsal. Only then did the penny drop; I was in Burnley! The place to which the buses ran through Shelf every hour, on the hour. I learned more practical geography in 50 minutes on Burnley Cattle Market than I had picked up in all my life up to that point. It also dawned on me, in a vivid flash, that one could make complex journeys, like Slaidburn to Shelf, more easily, faster and more cheaply, by bus than by train.

I am sure that the opera was good, but as Lieutenant Pinkerton was singing "Butterfly, Butterfly", all that was passing through my mind was a Ribble indicator being wound through "Accrington, Great Harwood, Sabden, Lower Trap, Padiham, Burnley". I have never subsequently been to the Opera. None could possibly match the enlightenment that I derived from being taken to Madame Butterfly.

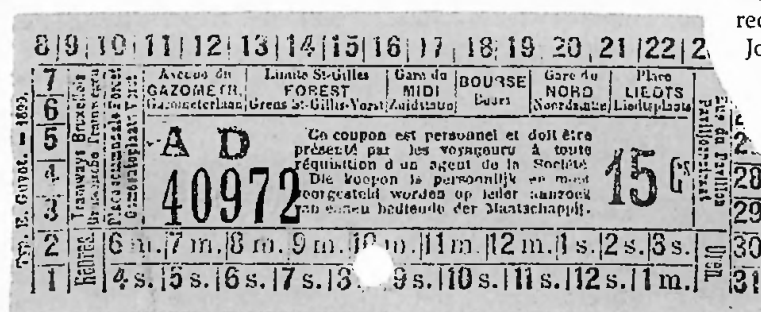


Avenue du Gazomètre

A piece in the *Journal* of the Transport Ticket Society a couple of years ago (p.165/2003) on tickets of the Tramways Bruxellois included the ticket now illustrated here. John Horne was attracted by one particular feature, the stage name bi-lingually expressed as: Avenue du Gazomètre / Gazometerlaan (just above the serial number). He wrote a short item for the "Historic Gas Times", drawing attention to the pride taken in the nineteenth century in the introduction of a gas supply, so that a street name, Avenue du Gazomètre, was not one that caused surprise.

He mentions that the gas works was a large one and was called Forest, (the next stage to the left on the ticket). It was built by the Imperial Continental Gas Association, an English concern founded by Congreve and his friends around 1824 and which existed until the 1970s. The Association still had major assets in Belgium at that time, but was better known in the UK for Calor Gas.

The gentrification of UK street names may now have run its course, leaving us still with many Gas Streets, Gas Alleys and the like. In fact, at Netley near Southampton, Wellington Avenue (or some similarly routine name) recently reverted to its 1860s name of Gashouse Hill. John comments that as it is not a fare stage, Solent Blue Line has not put it on its Wayfarer ticket machines. But



.... The Brussels ticket has a printer's imprint date of 1899. In this modern age with new sources of energy being strongly promoted, is it too far-fetched to suggest that by 2009, somewhere in the British Isles, we may have, say, Wind Farm Hill actually on local bus tickets?

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