

Newsletter

No. 45
March 2006

The Roads & Road Transport History Association

www.rrtha.org.uk

President:

Professor John Hibbs O.B.E.

Chairman:

Garry Turvey C.B.E.
139 Imberthorne Lane
East Grinstead,
West Sussex,
RH19 1RP

Secretary:

Chris Hogan
124 Shenstone Avenue
Norton, Stourbridge,
DY8 3EJ

roadsandrtha@aol.com

Treasurer:

Gordon Knowles
7 Squirrels Green,
Great Bookham, Surrey
KT23 3LE

Research Co-ordinator:

Tony Newman
21 Ffordd Argoed, Mold,
CH7 1LY

toekneenewman@hotmail.com

Academic Adviser:

Professor John Armstrong
Thames Valley University
London W5 5RF

Newsletter Editor:

Roger Atkinson O.B.E.
45 Dee Banks, Chester
CH3 5UU

rogeratkinson@f2s.com



Wartime ~ Buses in Eastgate, Chester

Emma Stuart of Chester History & Heritage has produced for Newsletter an exceptionally fine wartime photograph taken by an American airman, Robert Astrella, that he specifically donated to the City. Photography during the war was very limited. This one, of buses in Eastgate, Chester, is not only a good one, but it is possible to offer a little background on the photographer as well. In 1944, Robert Astrella was a photographer stationed at Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire with United States Army Air Force 379

Bombardment Group (Heavy), a unit of the Eighth Air Force. Kimbolton was a base for B-17 Flying Fortresses from which 330 combat missions were flown. It is not known precisely when Robert Astrella visited Chester, but it was in the 1944/5 period.

Note the Bisto kids on the back of both buses; and EWS (Emergency Water Supply) painted on the wall at the foot of St Werburgh Street. There is more about Chester, and Chester History & Heritage, on a later page.

END

In this issue

Our History, Our Heritage	2
Ammunition Dumps	4
Sources: The Roadway Goods	
Transport Guide	7
Association Matters	8
Newsletter Competition	8
Publications & Back Numbers	8
Introducing New Members	9

Editorial	9
Letters to the Editor	10
Research: Archive Retention	11
(Almost) Random Ramblings	12
Unfinished Business	13
Gregson & Gregson, Boulogne-sur-Mer	14
Book Reviews	15

Book Notices	16
McAdam and the Metalled Roads ..	18
World-wide Coverage	19
Britain's new 3ft 6in Gauge Tramway	20

Our History ~ Our Heritage

GARRY TURVEY

An article originally published in the December 2005 issue of Focus, the journal of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, and reproduced here by kind permission of the CILT.

This is the year of road transport anniversaries. The Automobile Association reached its centenary on 29th June. The road freight industry's eminent weekly journals were first published in 1905, "Commercial Motor" in March of that year, soon to be followed by "Motor Traction", which adopted its current title of "Motor Transport" in 1921. The Austin Motor Company was formed that year, so too the Scottish Motor Traction Company. Other centenary landmarks can also be identified, for after all 1905 was a significant year in the development of motor transport with some 20,000 motor vehicles of all types registered in the United Kingdom, although most commercial vehicles were still driven by steam. But there is more to it than centenaries. Roll the years forward a quarter of a century to 1930 and the Road Traffic Act of that year and the creation of the Traffic Commissioners who now celebrate their 75th anniversary. 2005 marks the 60th anniversary of the Road Haulage Association and the 50th anniversary of the Transport Association which had such an influence in the shaping of the haulage industry following the Second World War. Many more examples come to mind.

We, in the Roads and Road Transport History Association are to dedicate our 2005 Annual Symposium to these landmarks with sessions tracing the histories of the AA and the Traffic Commissioners, but I think that it is fair to say that overall reaction has been somewhat muted. Why is that? The pressures of modern business leave little time for nostalgia, some - maybe many - believe that to look back is a sign of weakness, whilst others, I have often heard it said, consider that the past is a total irrelevance from which they have nothing to learn. I believe that to be totally wrong, if not rather arrogant. Take any current transport issue and you can more or less guarantee that it has been encountered before. All too often historical perspective on transport is lacking and a little more understanding of where we have come from and the reasoning and logic behind earlier decisions can be of immense value in clarifying both where we are now and where we might be going in the future.

A few years ago I was asked to attend some of the discussions which formed part of the Government's Multi-Modal Studies. I was appalled at the lack of knowledge of many of those who were offering their solutions to what they perceived to be our "transport problems" and over the amount of time which was wasted on going over issues which had been researched and documented time and time again. Virtually all of that effort, to say nothing of the cost, reported to be no less than £35 million, could have been saved if those participating had bothered to study the subject beforehand. How can any one pontificate on road pricing without ever having read "Smeed"?

Let me quote one more example. I have already alluded to

the fact that this year is the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Traffic Commissioners. Were they not early, or even the first, industry regulators and if so, did any of the other industries consult them before they created their own modern day regulators?. Perhaps they did, but I doubt it. So when we regularly read of friction between various industries and their regulatory bodies with outright animosity not far below the surface, how come that for three quarters of a century the transport industry has enjoyed an excellent relationship with its regulators who in my experience manage to be both respected enforcers and yet part of the transport family?. This is one of the issues which we in the R&RTHA will be exploring at our Symposium.

Did others think that they had nothing to learn from transport? For that matter did anyone in transport suggest that there were lessons to learn from our experience over such a long period? I guess that the answer is "no" on both counts.

And that raises another all too familiar theme, namely the status of transport in the social and business hierarchy. We allow people to talk about the "transport problem", when in truth, in peace as in war, it has so often provided the solution. Throughout the ages it has responded successfully to the ever changing needs of society, allowing communities to grow and prosper, yet the public does not associate transport with liberty, opportunity and the workings of an active, healthy community, but with congestion, pollution and environmental destruction. We have not helped that situation by distancing ourselves from the word transport and camouflaging it with ill defined references to "logistics" and the "supply chain", as if we are ashamed to be associated with something as coarse as moving people and goods from one place to another. Yet without transport of goods and people nothing happens. Those who argue that transport is just part of a chain of business decisions, miss the point entirely. Transport is an essential element of life, which cannot be separated from all the other activities which go to make up society. It has always been so and it always will be. The more one studies transport history, the more that point is proven.

Where to begin?. For as long as there has been a need to move man and his products from place to place transport has played a role, so it follows that transport is as old as human society. However, most of us are happy to leave the exploration of those far off times to the specialist researchers and concentrate our interests on more recent eras. Whilst we have no hard and fast rules, we in the R&RTHA rarely venture back further than the middle of the 19th century, and if we expect history to guide current decisions and policies it is unrealistic to think otherwise. That, however, is not our main motivation, important as it is. Our prime objectives are to promote, encourage and co-ordinate the history of roads and road transport, both passenger and freight. We do so in the knowledge that there are many sites and organisations throughout the country which devote their efforts and resources to capturing our history, in museums, at vintage vehicle

events, within the archives of some of the larger operators, in libraries and private collections. Some are corporate members of R&RTHA and this year we have been delighted to welcome the CILT into membership, so too the AA Motoring Trust, the Road Haulage Association, the Transport Association and the Norwich Traffic Club amongst others. Our individual membership covers a great diversity of interests and this breadth of knowledge within our ranks provides a sound platform for our work. Nevertheless we know that much more needs to be done and that some history which should be captured inevitably falls through the net. That is not surprising given the fragmented nature of the road transport industry and the preponderance of small companies, but once records have been destroyed that organisation's contribution to history, if only at local level has gone for ever. A relatively new member recently asked "what arrangements there might be to secure transport archives and collections of private individuals, be they industry professionals, historians, photographers or the plain Eddie Stobart spotter?" He makes the point that within these collections there must lie a vast resource of value to future historians and he draws attention to an initiative by the Royal Aeronautical Society which could lead to the establishment of the National Aviation Library. He asks whether there is a need for some similar form of repository for road transport and could R&RTHA be the catalyst to bring it about? At the moment our role is advisory, drawing attention in particular to the value of depositing old records if no more obvious solution comes to mind, with the appropriate County Archivist, but it would be great to be able to do more.

I believe that it is also important to recall and safeguard the names of those who have led the industry over the centuries of its development, because there is no better way to generate interest and knowledge than through the exploits of individuals. This has been well illustrated in recent times through the wisdom of Sir Peter Baldwin, once Permanent Secretary at the Department of Transport, who realised that unless urgent action was taken, the story of our motorways would never be told, and who better to commit that story to historical record than those

who were responsible for the design and construction of the roads?. The resulting publications "The Motorway Achievement", which Sir Peter presented to our 2004 Symposium, will be an immensely valuable source of research for generations to come. The names of pioneers from other walks of life, even other branches of transport, are known far and wide, but apart from some of the more famous vehicle manufacturers most people would find it difficult to name any of those who have created our highly efficient road transport industry. In the days when our Institute was located at Portland Place there was a photographic record of all past-Presidents to remind us all of their contributions over the years. I wonder what has happened to that and in the context of this article am I alone in regretting the demise of "Proceedings", once a valued CIT service?

The vital task before us is to ensure that road transport's contribution to the development of society and prosperity is preserved, and appreciated. The history which we have must be safeguarded, but we must also recognise that the transport story is in a state of constant evolution. This means that the temptation to jettison data must be rejected because in years to come the overall picture will be made up of countless images sourced from operations large and small and once we interrupt that data flow the ensuing gaps in history will be there forever. So, I don't think it is too much to ask-nay it is imperative- that those who are at the helm today should accept that their activities should also be set in the context of a history stretching back over the centuries. I have already made the point that an understanding of earlier events can help to identify solutions for the present and there is no reason to believe that future generations will think any differently. They won't be able to do so if we have neglected to leave the evidence. For after all, like our predecessors we have a proud story to tell. A story of continuing success and innovation as transport has reacted to ever changing circumstances, political pressures and customer requirements. Above all an industry with a proud history and heritage which we must preserve.



Unloading bricks

The sheer manual labour evident in this photograph is commented on in the Editorial and mentioned in the book review "London Brick Company" in this issue. The lorry illustrated here is Masters Bros., not London Brick Company.

Ammunition Dumps

ROGER ATKINSON

This article opens with an admirable explanatory note on wartime ammunition dumps in the United Kingdom, drawn from the website for the village of Slaidburn.

During the Second World War, large quantities of munitions were produced and imported and needed to be stored prior to use. In order to prevent large ammunition dumps being destroyed by Luftwaffe bombing, ammunition dispersal sites in areas away from centres of industrial production were required. To this end, certain stretches of road in the Slaidburn area were commandeered by the military for use as storage depots.



"bomb dumps" on the Slaidburn to Lane Ends Road (left)

The south-eastern side of the Forest of Bowland fulfilled the requirements of the military in that:

- ♦ it was a location sufficiently remote from the centres of population and industrial production which were prime targets for bombing;
- ♦ it was a location sufficiently close to the munitions factories of industrial Lancashire to reduce transport time and cost;
- ♦ It was a location close to the west coast port of Liverpool, where large quantities of munitions were landed from the United States of America;
- ♦ it was a location which provided a logical staging post between the ports and munitions factories of north-west England which produced the bombs, bullets and shells and the forces including the Bomber Command and United States Army Air Force airfields of eastern England which used them;
- ♦ it was close to Hellifield, which was one of the busiest railway junctions in the country at that time; with links to main lines on both sides of the Pennines, the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle main line which runs down the centre of Northern England, and the railways serving the industrial towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire;

- ♦ the remoteness of the area meant that security could easily be maintained, with little chance of strangers going un-noticed or un-challenged.

The road between Slaidburn and Lane Ends was one of those commandeered by the military. The walls along the side of the road were pushed over into the ditch to produce small areas of hard standing along the verges approximately 50-100 yards apart for use as dispersal storage bays. In other places the ditch was filled in with rubble. Ammunition of all kinds was then transported in along the roads and was stacked on the areas of hard standing, often using Italian Prisoners of War as labourers.

The stacks were then covered in camouflage netting. Hawthorn and other trees along the roadside were left and acted as further camouflage to prevent detection from the air. Sentries, rather surprisingly including Italian Prisoners of War (presumably after Italy's capitulation and subsequent declaration of war on Germany in December 1943), were posted at each end of the road and any travellers were stopped and questioned as to the nature and reason for their journey.

The main depot for the Slaidburn area was at Gisburn, where large quantities of munitions were loaded and unloaded at the railway sidings where the auction market and wood-yard are now. One farmer remembers a friend going there and describing seeing them unloading bombs: *"They were rolling them off the wagons and letting them drop on the floor!... He was scared to death. Somebody must have known they were safe..."*

These dispersal bays are still known locally as the "bomb dumps" and can still be seen, particularly between the Harrop Hall road end and Lane Ends, where some are used as passing places or form field gateways. Some 23 dispersal bays can be seen on the mile and a half section between Harrop Hall and Lane Ends.

Since the war these "bomb dumps" have had another use:- giving further service to the community as parking places for courting couples!

This is followed by an extract from the website of the village of Olney, where Brian (Charlie) Mynard recalls his wartime schooldays. Brian was born in 1930 into a farming family and was nine when the war started on 3rd September 1939.

There were ammunition dumps alongside the roads leading into Olney and even up some farm tracks. There were several hundred in this area, situated up Weston Road, Lavendon Road, Warrington Road and up the Hyde

Lane right up to the farm. Farm road had them placed on both sides. The dumps were constructed from three half-moon shaped corrugated sheets of metal bolted together to form an arch. Several arches were bolted together to form the length of the dump; they were at least seven feet high in the centre. They were painted black and had camouflaged wire netting hanging across both ends.

The ammunition in the dumps included land-mines. These mines didn't have fuses in them, so we lads used take their middles out and put them back together again so nobody knew we'd been. The mines were cylindrical; with a gap all the way round within the outer casing. The gap was filled with steel balls. You just took the cap off the end, tipped the mine upside down and a couple of hundred steel balls fell out. The steel balls were beautiful for using in a catapult, perfectly round, accurate, you could hit many a rabbit, or pheasant sitting in a tree. Of course, we all had catapults when we were young!



Lorries, some belonging to the London Brick Company, went up and down Hyde Lane to the dumps all during the War and ruined the lane. Bill Campion was one of the LBC drivers. At the end of the War, Graham Needham took over the farm from a Major Randall. Graham applied to the government for a grant to lay a concrete lane. The application was successful and the concrete lane was laid by three Irish chaps, Paddy and Batty McGowen and Larry. The concrete started at Warrington Road and finished at the first cattle grid way up the lane. All the digging and shovelling was done by hand; the concrete was prepared using a small cement mixer. Maybe that's how several farmers have concrete roads leading into their farms.

But now let us move on two or three years. The war with Germany had ended in May 1945, and with Japan in August 1945. An extract from Hansard tells of a debate in the House of Commons on 18 April 1946.

Mr Snadden (Perth & Kinross, Western). I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the danger arising from the continuous presence of the vast quantities of ammunition and explosives in many parts of the country, particularly in the counties of Perth and Stirling. As the House knows, a devastating explosion took place in my constituency near the village of Doune, when 57,000 sticks of gelignite blew up. I happened to be very near at the time and was practically an eyewitness of this event.

When I arrived at the scene, I found six craters, all of them as large as the smoking room of this honourable House. Many farms were devastated and two villages were damaged. There were, admittedly, few deaths but that was due to the fact that the explosion took place at a point off the public road, where very few people happened to be at the time.

I also want to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that Perthshire and the northern part of Stirlingshire are at present one vast ammunition dump. I am credibly informed that there are 100,000 tons of ammunition and high explosives in that part of the country, that there are quantities of gelignite, T.N.T., and gunpowder and, in addition, 8,000 tons of gas. It is almost unnecessary to point out that at this time of year the danger of fires is very great. We are approaching the holiday season and, as this House knows, this part of Scotland contains a very beautiful locality known as the Trossachs – a veritable Mecca of holidaymakers. Cycling clubs from cities go there, and often they are in a care-free mood. They are liable to light fires and violent explosions may take place at any time.

..... I know of a case where the tarpaulin was taken off a shed and the campers made tea inside the shed, almost sitting on boxes of ammunition.

The Financial Secretary to the War Office

(Mr Bellenger): I am sure that the House would wish me, on behalf of the War Office and on my own behalf, to say how sorry we are that this accident occurred and to sympathise with the constituents of the hon. Member for Perth & Kinross. ... I would like the House to believe that the War Office, which, after all, are only the agents of the Ministry of Supply in disposing of surplus ammunition, are doing their best, as quickly as they can. One of the governing factors is the safety of those who are dealing with the removal of this ammunition. On the Continent, where a great deal of disposal of ammunition dumps has been going on, there has, unfortunately, been very serious loss of life. These operations have resulted in something like 700 deaths and much material damage to railways and docks. ... In this respect we are fortunate in this country in that, so far, there has been very little loss of life in clearing ammunition by our own troops. Actually, 70% of the ammunition stored in any one spot in this country is not dangerous, for various reasons. Indeed, in some cases it would not matter if civilians sat on the ammunition, as I have done in the past, when I was in the Royal Artillery.

The hon. Gentleman asked me what we hoped to do in the future. We expect to dispose of 400,000 tons in 1946. I am told that 900,000 tons of ammunition are stored in sub-depots all over the country. Only approximately 65,000 tons of it is what we regard as of a dangerous nature. Some of it is under guard, as far as we can possibly supply guards for it. I regret to say that we cannot possibly find all the guards that we require. Therefore, we do the next best thing, namely, exhibit notices where ammunition is stored, warning the public of the danger of being too careless or negligent.

Mr Snadden: [referring to Perthshire] Can he deny, or otherwise, the statement that ammunition is to be left in

that area until the year 1949?

Mr Bellenger: No, Sir, we hope to deal with it well before 1949.

Let us glide quickly over a brief newspaper report:

"The Times" 26 June 1946: SEVEN SOLDIERS DEAD IN EXPLOSION The War Office announces that an explosion occurred yesterday at No.2 Military Port, Stranraer, Scotland, in which seven soldiers were killed, 12 seriously injured and seven less seriously hurt. The accident occurred while a railway truck load of fuses was being conveyed to a ship. The ammunition was to be dumped in deep water outside Loch Ryan.

The Prime Minister at the time was Clement Attlee, who had a reputation for being a trifle intolerant of Ministers who made rash promises. Whether it was Mr Bellenger who enquired, or whether it was someone at the War Office who got down to his sums, is not known, but at Christmas 1946, some individual with an enquiring mind looked at the practical logistics. If there had been 100,000 tons in Perthshire in April, and it was all to be removed by the end of 1948 (as promised by Mr Bellenger), i.e. in (roundly) 125 weeks, something approaching 800 tons needed to be moved each week. This patently was not happening. On the sort of figures that were being achieved in the latter part of 1946, it was going to take 62 years to clear the Perthshire dumps – they would be given the "all clear" in 2008, not 1948. A clandestine survey, not in the higher reaches of Scottish Command, but down-to-earth at the very point of delivery, was arranged by the War Office. It found:

At Christmas, 1946, based near Doune, at the south-western extremity of the county, but responsible for guarding and clearing all the dumps in Perthshire, was an amiable unit of the Royal Pioneer Corps. It had the assistance of six civilians on bicycles who were the "night guards" for the dumps. The Pioneers had some three-ton trucks. They had to drive a truck to a dump – which could be many miles away. Not all the dumps were at the roadside; in fact, most were set back from 20 to 50 yards. The risk had to be assessed. Do you back the truck up to the dump, then bump all the way back to the road with two tons of unstable explosives? Or do you carry the same two tons by hand, (risking tripping over a hummock), and lift it up to shoulder height to load it on to the truck? Then the truck had to be driven 'x' miles to a sea loch, with some sort of pier facility and unloaded by hand from truck to a dredger (which had to be arranged for, and actually be there). The Pioneers had heard of what had happened at No.2 Military Port, Stranraer. Not entirely surprisingly, this small unit, in a good week, was reluctantly achieving about the 30 to 40 tons (fifteen to twenty lorry loads). The whole job would take roughly 62 years.

In fact, in the first two months of 1947, we had the "great freeze", and no ammunition at all could possibly be moved; the whole country was snowbound. Progress in the rest of 1947 remained slow.

Another newspaper report was not encouraging:

"Perthshire Advertiser" 18 October 1947: "Ammo." Explosion Kills Boy Western district headquarters of Perthshire County Police yesterday continued to investigate the ammunition explosion near Inchrae House Hotel, Aberfoyle, in which one boy was killed and another injured the previous day.

The victim was 12-year-old Allan Culbard, son of the forester at Baleich, Aberfoyle. Ian MacFadzean, aged 8, of Ardnachree, Aberfoyle, is detained in Killearn Hospital. Peter Dick, six-year-old son of an Army captain, residing at the hotel, escaped unhurt.

The dead boy had been missing from home since about noon on Thursday, but no undue alarm was felt at the time. The accident was discovered after MacFadzean had visited a doctor of his own accord and told him he had hurt himself by falling from a tree. The doctor sent him to Killearn Hospital to be X-rayed. It was then found that his injuries had been caused by shrapnel, and the hospital authorities asked for inquiries to be made.

A search party went out and the body of Allan Culbard was found lying in a burn after darkness had fallen. Parts of hand-grenades and noses of shells were found near the spot. Two long, brown, oblong-shaped cylinders were also picked up.

Large quantities of ammunition have been stored in the Aberfoyle district since the war ended. The inhabitants have frequently made representations asking that the ammunition be removed.

Extracts from Perth & Kinross County Council Minutes, 20 October and 1 December 1947

Major Cameron referred to the recent most unfortunate tragedy at Aberfoyle when one child had been killed and another seriously injured as a result of an explosion of live ammunition from War Department dumps in the neighbourhood. Major Cameron stated that in the two years which had now elapsed since the end of the war, very slow progress had been made in removing the ammunition dumps and he urged that the Council should make representations in the strongest possible terms that the dumps should be removed without further delay from the whole district.

At the Meeting on 1 December, a reply from the War Office was presented:

"Your Council's concern at the continual [sic] storage of ammunition in Perthshire is appreciated, but there is little hope of its removal for some considerable time. "A system of priority must be worked to. Perthshire is only one of eleven such areas pressing for the early removal of ammunition, but the governing factor is movement. The ammunition has got to be moved either to break-down plants, or to depots, or to ports, or Wales for large-scale demolition. Movement (train, road transport, coasters) is strictly limited for military purposes now that the urgent conditions of war no longer demand priority.

The Ministry of War Transport naturally prefer to allot a train for food or coal rather than for ammunition which is heading for Davy Jones Locker. We agree with this policy and try to make no unnecessary demand for transport. When we move ammunition, we move it once only and that is to its final destination, whether this is for long-term storage in a permanent depot or a break-down plant or to a port for dumping at sea."

So this article comes to an abrupt and unsatisfactory conclusion; lots of loose ends and questions unanswered: Surely, this ammunition was moved? Yes. But it has not been traced when; can readers help?

Who moved it? I do not know for certain, but have a suspicion that it was the Polish Resettlement Corps – ex-soldiers who were keen not to be repatriated to Poland. Again, can readers help?

What on earth has this to do with roads and road transport history? In fact, it is totally pertinent. Road haulage history has few chroniclers. Yet road haulage was necessary at virtually every ammunition dump – discounting the few sited near railway tracks. Moving this ammunition was a huge job, coupled at that time with manual handling and loading at each stage of transit. Has the history already been written? Can readers help?

Finally, can we be thankful that the lack of priority given to public safety apparent in 1947, as evidenced above, has long ago been interred in the dustbin of history? Or, expressed another way, have the lessons of history been learned? Well, of course, we can. See "Weak Links" a most apposite contribution from Richard Storey, which now follows:

WEAK LINKS ~ Richard Storey

Consideration of the distribution chain usually focuses on its moving aspects, lorries and mechanical handling. The vulnerability of this part of the operation is highlighted by the swift effect of protests, whether over fuel tax, fuel prices or the wholesale price of milk. This winter (2005-6), we have even had listed amongst the likely effects of an

avian flu epidemic, a temporary shortage of drivers, leading to food shortages and the possible need to control or prioritise supplies. Recent events, however, have switched attention to one of the fixed ends of the chain, the distribution centres, the significance of which is so obvious that it is easily overlooked.

The occasion for this note was the Hemel Hempstead oil depot inferno of 11-14 December 2005, unique in its scale as a peacetime phenomenon, though there have been earlier examples of distribution centre fires: a three-day blaze at the Oldbury depot of Taylors of Martley in July 1997; and, in November 2005, the mass clothing retailer, Primark, was forced to charter special air deliveries from China to help make good the loss by fire of the entire contents of its dedicated warehouse at Magna Park, Lutterworth, owned and operated by TNT. Which brings us the Buncefield oil depot blaze, close to the M1 at Hemel Hempstead, with an adjacent industrial estate and nearby housing. It is not the writer's intent to attempt to apportion blame, but rather to raise at least one pertinent question. Namely, why, given the UK's long-established planning control system, such development was permitted so close to an obvious potential hazard, without insistence on a cordon sanitaire to lessen the likely effects of blast and fire. Only the timing of the outbreak, as Sunday morning began, prevented almost certain large-scale fatalities, had staff been arriving or working in nearby businesses, or residents been out and about their daily activities. This good fortune extended to Furnells Transport, whose vehicles on their lorry park escaped damage as the blast passed over the top of them. The blaze was brought under control by Wednesday 14th December; panic queues at filling stations were a short-term reaction, disruption of the lower ends of the M1 and M10 extended into the working week; some airline operations were affected by the need to change fuelling arrangements; and there were obviously major effects on the distribution patterns of fuel by road tanker. The problems caused for locally-based transport operators and the relaxation of affected tanker drivers' hours and working time rules were covered in Commercial Motor on 19 January 2006.

Sources: the Roadway Goods Transport Guide

During the late 1920s / early '30s there was published a series of ROADWAY timetable guides to motor coach and omnibus services throughout the UK. Perhaps a little ahead of its time, its publisher, Roadway Time Tables, Bookings & Publications Ltd, did not endure although a surprising number of its guides did, and they remain much sought after by timetable collectors to this day.

Perhaps less well known is that in 1931 Roadway also appear to have published a ROADWAY GOODS TRANSPORT GUIDE under the auspices of the Commercial Motor Users Association and in conjunction with the publishers of Commercial Motor. Seemingly this contained a list of known operators with their addresses, branch depots, clearing houses, etc.

Clearly, along with the well known MOTOR TRANSPORT YEAR BOOKS, these guides would provide a useful insight into the road transport goods sector at a formative period; but have any copies survived? These were economically printed on very cheap paper and not intended to last. That so many passenger ones have survived is a tribute to the squirrel like enthusiasts of the period. No such comparable interest was then evident for the goods sector.

It would be interesting to hear whether any readers are aware of any extant copies of the publication that may be accessible for research purposes.

D J Bubier

Association Matters

NEW MEMBERS

The Road Transport Fleet Data Society
(corporate member)
David Allen, Leeds
Fraser Robertson, Wrexham
R.C. Stones, Chester
Leigh Trevail, Diss

Newsletter Competition

Just before Christmas, Chester Heritage published a book funded by the National Lottery. It is entitled "What did you do in the War Deva?" (Deva was the Roman name for Chester). The book is favourably reviewed on another page by our member, Bruce Maund, the Merseyside transport historian. The book covers many aspects of Chester in wartime. The chapter on transport was written by our new member, Robert C Stones.

In the ordinary way, the Newsletter review would indicate the price, the ISBN and point to the availability of the book. But the National Lottery imposed a very curious, (and, in your Editor's view, deplorable) restriction. Copies of the book are neither to be sold nor given away to the public. But this restriction applied only to the original print-run of 1,000 copies. Chester History & Heritage are now seeking further funding and hope to produce 500 more copies, which will be for sale.

The book has been supplied to all schools and libraries in the Chester district, and the very numerous individuals who contributed wartime recollections or artefacts to it have been given a copy. The stocks that remained from the first print-run have been offered to worthy local organisations that may then organise competitions and award the books as prizes. The R&RTHA is very grateful to Emma Stuart, the book's Editor, and to Chester City Council for letting the R&RTHA have a small supply of the books.

This is the competition. Please consider the articles in the last four issues of *Newsletter*, 42, 43, 44 and this present issue. Please vote for what you consider to have been the best three articles. You have three votes; all your three votes are of equal weight. The writers of the nine articles which receive the highest number of votes will be sent a copy of "What did you do in the War Deva?".

Articles by your Editor, Roger Atkinson, do NOT qualify in this competition.

Please send your votes by post to

Roger Atkinson,
45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU
by Saturday 22 April 2006.

Results and winners will be announced in *Newsletter* 46.



**Chester
City Council**

Stop Press

If you vote in the R&RTHA competition (above), you will, by and large, be voting for someone else to win the book. There is just a slender chance that you could win one yourself in another competition. If you send – on a postcard, please – to Chester History & Heritage before 31 March 2006, your name, address and contact telephone number, and "explain in one sentence why owning a copy is important to you" you might just be lucky. 50 books are being offered by Chester History & Heritage, St Michael's Church, Bridge Street Row East, Chester CH1 1NW. (Competition may be pretty fierce).

The pictures in the book are not available at present; but so that we could have a wartime Chester illustration, Emma Stuart has very thoughtfully supplied *Newsletter* with the picture that appears on our front page.

Publications and Back Numbers

The 2005 Symposium papers "Transport Anniversaries", have now been printed. All members who attended the Symposium should have had a copy, as well as all those who ordered a copy along with their subscription renewal.

2004 Symposium papers are sold out.

2002, 2003 and 2005 papers are still available; prices differ: 2002 £4-00; 2003 £2-50; 2005 £5-00.
(£10-00 for all three).

Back numbers of all issues of *Newsletter* from No.37 onwards are available @ £2-50 per issue. All prices are post free. Cheques to R & R T H A Ltd. Order from

Roger Atkinson,
45 Dee Banks, Chester, CH3 5UU

Newsletter No.46

- ▶ The target date for issue of No. 46 is
8 June 2006
Contributions by
9 May please
- ▶ Provisional target date for No. 47 is
7 September 2006
Contributions by 8 August
- ▶ The 2006 subscription covers Nos.45 to 48

Introducing New Members

The Road Transport FLEET DATA Society

The society was formed at the end of 1980, at first being known as the Council Vehicle Society. Our aim was to study and record municipal vehicles and to preserve a database for future research by transport historians. A few years earlier there had been a massive reorganisation of local councils which saw the number cut dramatically to roughly the set up employed by local government today. It became clear that much of the knowledge of the old fleets, their liveries and vehicles would be lost; so we made a belated attempt to record details for posterity.

Local authority fleets are very different today from those of 25 years ago. Councils are now "service buyers" with contractors being employed to run services. This has spread through the whole range of services, starting with refuse but progressing to highway maintenance and

housing, so that today many councils have no direct labour at all.

As we were attracting new members, we decided to widen the society to include various fleets which were not covered by any groups, and included the public utilities, AA and RAC recovery fleets, ambulances, government vehicles, military, railway road fleets, etc. We then changed to the present title to more accurately reflect our extended coverage.

We try and inform our members by production of newsletters, booklets and loose-leaf publications. A few years ago we started a web site – www.fleetdata.co.uk – though I don't suppose it will ever really be finished! Anyone interested further can contact me: Peter Jarman, 18 Poplar Close, Biggleswade, Beds, SG18 0EW; or by e-mail – peter@fleetdata.co.uk

Editorial

We open with an article by our Chairman, Garry Turvey, that was published at the end of last year by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

One topic referred to in our Chairman's article also constitutes a thread running through a number of items in this issue. In *Newsletter 44*, in the Report of the September Business Meeting on page 8, a good deal of space was given to the disposal of privately-held, transport-connected assets and archives. There is no simple answer. In this issue, in a Letter to the Editor, Richard Storey refers to Printed Ephemera Preserved. In the Sources section, Dave Bubier enquires whether a Roadway Goods Transport Guide of 1931 has survived. Also, it was precisely in connection with this theme that Gerry Serpell-Morris of the Transport Ticket Society was invited to contribute his article, "Unfinished Business". Readers are particularly directed to his concluding paragraphs; but may also reflect on what happens to, and what use is made of, a collection of ephemera when it is donated to a museum – if the museum does not publicise it, catalogue it, exhibit it or know what to do with it.

Then, an item in the Research section is headed "Archive retention". Our new member, Robert Stones, poses the question of what to do with a significant collection of old legal and other contemporary records of a turnpike road. His dilemma is followed by some cogent – if not necessarily comfortable – thoughts from our Research Co-ordinator, Tony Newman. The alternatives of trying to ensure survival and/or accessibility by disposal to libraries, museums or archives versus disposal by bequest or sale to enthusiastic private collectors strongly emerge from these different items; as well as the loss of a resource if a collection is broken up.

The article on Ammunition Dumps may be felt by some readers to be outrageous, and to merit an apology. It comes to an abrupt end, leaving the country, at the end of 1947, still littered with ammunition dumps and the problems that these generated. It fails to tell how they

were cleared. Let your Editor plead that it does serve three purposes. The first is that many items of research are never published because their writers feel that they are not finished and rounded off. This item is neither finished nor rounded off; but it is being published. The second purpose is to emphasise (if that is ever needed within this Association) that transport of goods by road simply "happens"; no one records it. It is assumed that ammunition dumps in the countryside will be stocked and that, in due course, they will be removed. Finding out how, by whom and when is not the simplest of research projects. Which brings us to the third purpose: namely, to stimulate answers from our members. David Harman, in his article "(Almost) Random Ramblings" stresses the value of the R&RTHA bringing out sources that may be wholly familiar to one member, but utterly unknown to another. Indeed, he even lays on the R&RTHA the duty of doing this. Hopefully, there will be a member, or members, who will know all about ammunition dumps; and be amazed that your Editor did not know the sources to which to turn. Please tell him (and through him, other readers). And if you know whether the Polish Resettlement Corps played a part in the operation, that will be a bonus.

Another theme in this issue that has arisen as much by chance as deliberately is that of manual loading and unloading of lorries. It is highly relevant to Ammunition Dumps (above); and there is a picture of 'unloading bricks' elsewhere in this issue. The subject is also touched on in the book review of "The London Brick Company"; and it is one that was (rather briefly) covered in the 2003 R&RTHA / Science Museum publication "Companion to British Road Haulage History", under the no doubt technically precise but not instantly called to mind, heading, "handball".

Finally, please do not be afraid to put forward articles and names for the *Newsletter* competition this month. Which articles, in issues 42-45, have you particularly liked? Our members are diverse; the vote could be an interesting one.

Letters to the Editor

A "COLOUR QUOTA" AT THAMES VALLEY

I was interested to read Dave Bubier's article on the "colour bar" at the Bristol Omnibus Company, and thought this might be the opportunity to record my own experience at associated companies.

In 1966 I became a Tilling Group Senior Management Trainee, attached to the West Yorkshire Road Car Co. I did most of my depot training at Leeds and spent a shorter period at Bradford. At Leeds I cannot remember there being any "coloured" employees, nor indeed any applications for employment; At Bradford I believe there was one Sikh and again I cannot remember any applications for employment. Both depots were near enough fully staffed. The Bradford situation was of course in contrast to the then Bradford City Transport, who already employed a significant number of Asians and were later to be challenged on their failure to promote Asians to supervisory posts. Incidentally Ian Patey was by this time Chairman of the West Yorkshire company.

On completion of my training in 1968 I was sent to the Maidenhead depot of Thames Valley Traction and found a very different situation. We were six miles from Slough, beyond which Heathrow was about the same distance. Slough was also the border between our "territory" and that of London Transport's Country area (about to become London Country Bus Services). Most of our mileage was run in Slough, where we ran common routes with LT, and many of our staff lived there (indeed a strong case could be made that the depot should not have been in Maidenhead at all). A dispute was ongoing over the discrepancy between our rates of pay and those at LT's Windsor garage, which ran their Slough local services. Maidenhead, like all Tilling depots at the time, was tied to the national wage agreement of the National Council for the Omnibus Industry (NCOI), with local agreements on detailed matters such as payment for meal breaks.

Not surprisingly, Maidenhead suffered from chronic staff shortages, service cancellations sometimes reaching 10% of total mileage, and a militant branch of the TGWU. Much of my job was trying to recruit drivers and conductors fast enough to replace those who left; I prepared statistics for the Road Transport Industry Training Board in 1969 which showed that we had an annual 200% turnover rate of conductors and that few of those recruited stayed longer than 6 months. I became aware that a quota had been agreed by management with the TGWU providing that "coloured" staff should be limited to 12, in contrast to an establishment of about 200. On my arrival I believe the figure was 96 dual-crew drivers, 96 conductors and 14 "driver/conductors", the Thames Valley term for one-man drivers; the pay dispute had prevented any increase in "pay-as-you-enter".

I was therefore faced with a situation that was not only ethically (and by this time legally) indefensible but operationally crazy. The crunch came when two very presentable Pakistani drivers applied for employment; one came from Newcastle and would need some familiarisation with our Bristol crash-gearbox buses, but the other had been working with Eastern National and would not even need any type training. Even if I had wanted to, I could not pretend there were no vacancies

because blackboards were on display on the stands outside my office listing the service cancellations. I knew that the first Race Relations Act had recently been passed and was concerned that the two drivers were a set-up.

As a new boy I was not sure what to do, but decided to call in a colleague from another depot who was an old hand; the TGWU Branch Chairman and Secretary were taken off the road and summoned to a meeting. The old hand used the "bogeyman" tactic of an unwanted outside force that could not be ignored, essentially saying "I hate the blacks as much as you do, but we cannot ignore this new legislation". The quota was lifted and before long we had employees named Singh alone numbered up to 12; the first Asian Inspector was appointed in, I think, early 1970.

David Holding

SIGNPOSTS

I was also interested to see the piece on Signposts in *Newsletter* 44 (p.6). You might like to know that the Friends of the Lake District have been actively pursuing the retention and re-introduction of traditional signs in Cumbria, to the extent that there is now a small cottage industry producing them for the County Council. Anyone wishing to pursue this should contact Jack Ellerby at the Friends' office in Kendal.

David Holding

PRINTED EPHEMERA PRESERVED

The collection and study of printed ephemera, the minor printed items derived from and reflecting all aspects of daily life, has the effect of bringing to light and preserving, often through the market place, intriguing material which can shed light of subjects as varied as costume, horticulture, the retail trade and transport. The foundation in late 1975 by the late Maurice Rickards of the Ephemera Society has given a great stimulus to the subject, which is mentioned here to draw attention to elusive road transport items which surface from time to time through dealers' catalogues. As an example, a catalogue issued at the end of 2005 included an unused Post Horse Duty ticket and an advertising sheet for Tanner & Bayliss fly waggons between Cripplegate and Cheltenham and Gloucester, both c.1820.* and a receipt issued in 1837 by Moore's Old Green Man & Still mail, post coach, van, wagon and canal office, Oxford Street. Such material is not cheap, but it is encouraging to know that pieces of this kind survive and are preserved by market forces.

Richard Storey

* At p.15-16, in *Newsletter* 39, the subject of stage coaches and their coachmen on the London - Cheltenham / Gloucester services was considered. But the corresponding freight operations were (some readers might interpose "as usual") not touched upon. However, at Chapter VI of the book "Carriers & Coachmasters" reviewed elsewhere in this issue, the advent of "flying waggons", just beginning to develop almost a century earlier than 1820, is covered. The displacement of packhorses by flying waggons on some routes came initially as a summer only operation, the dangers of waggon operation in darkness over poor roads preventing their all-year-round use. Ed.RA

Research: Archive Retention

Our new member, Robert C Stones, wrote the chapter on transport in the book "What did you do in the War, Deva?", which is both reviewed in our Book Reviews and is the subject of a competition announced elsewhere in this issue. But, as a quite separate matter, Robert poses a topical question to the R&RTHA.

Local history is his real passion, coupled with all that that encompasses. His primary interest is in the Potteries, with the numerous pottery firms, including the Wedgwoods, and their development spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His archive covers several subjects including the above and the North Staffordshire lime industry c.1780-1850 and the Staffordshire colliery industry.

Some years ago, he learned that a firm of solicitors were throwing out their archives – large boxes of papers, dusty, but generally in fair to good condition. He was late on the scene, and acquired them from a dealer, not from the solicitors. They come geographically from the Potteries. Josiah Wedgwood's acquisition of land, building of kilns, trading matters and so on are among them. But there are three boxes of papers and account books, spanning perhaps an eighty year period, relating to the Ashbourne – Leek – Macclesfield turnpike (and ancillary roads). Three counties are involved: Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire. In broad terms, the archivists of these counties expressed, at the time, a less than overwhelming interest in acquiring the records, either for financial reasons – since Robert Stones did look for some recompense for his rescue and storage of them – or because of their volume, although that is not truthfully overwhelming.

He explains that his whole intention with the entire archive has been to try to keep it together. Not only has he had custody of it for about 15 years, but he has considerably added to it. He emphasises that he is an ordinary person in a house, not a dealer with a warehouse. Only the Turnpike records stand out as distinguishable from the rest as : 1) successive generations of the Challinor family (from where the archive originated) were either Committee members, or Chairmen of the Trusts; 2) they do cover three roads that join each other.

Robert views the turnpike documents as worthy of

preservation as an entity, not to be broken up and sold almost certainly for more money than a unitary collection would fetch. To conclude with his own words: "I am happy to sell them and wait for the proceeds in instalments if necessary. How about The British Library? My overriding desire is that they should be accessible for research. As I said on the phone I would rather move house and keep them to my dying day."

This is a serious, but almost certainly not unique, dilemma on which it is hoped that members of the R&RTHA may be able offer views or advice.

Tony Newman, our Research Co-ordinator, had this dilemma posed to him, and offered these, not entirely comforting, thoughts:

Firstly two basic questions -

1. We need to ask the question "Why are we seeking to preserve all these documents?"
2. Enquiries should be made of one or two County Archivists and perhaps the Society of Archivists, asking what are their current criteria for accepting documents for storage?

Then, when considering the answers, more questions follow:

3. If we are wanting to keep all these items because they might be of interest to someone in the future who will be researching the subject, how can we be assured a) that this someone will actually wish to use them and b) that this someone will ever find them? (This question is like the status of stuff many of us hoard in garden sheds and garages!)
4. If we are wanting to keep all these items simply because they happen to have survived as a collection for X years, is that sufficient reason for keeping them for another Y years? Must there not be some greater justification for keeping them? If there is, what is it?
5. With increasing pressure on storage space and rising costs of secure maintenance, cataloguing and providing access for readers, is it going to be realistic to continue present practices into the future?
6. Is digitisation and filming of records really the answer or does it bring more problems than it solves?

That is just a start to a huge question-mark that is emerging.....

Changed Priorities

In 1945, a photograph (not sufficiently clear to reproduce here) showed four men on a lorry, with two more walking beside it on a snow-covered road with significant drifts. No other vehicle in sight. The caption read: "The buses must go through! Snow-drifts are ignored by this Leyland Hippo, used by Northern Ireland Transport Board to keep its main bus routes passable. It has been known to work 50 hours non-stop".

Nowadays might the picture be of less snow, fewer workmen, but dozens of stationary vehicles, with accompanying text: "Snow causes chaos on roads. Angry motorists demand to know why the gritters were not out"? Unlikely to be any mention of either buses or Hippos.

(Almost) Random Ramblings

DAVID HARMAN

I was very interested to learn of the Railway & Canal Historical Society's *Bibliography of the History of Inland Waterways, Railways and Road Transport in the British Isles* in *Newsletter* 44. As I understand it, a wide range of periodicals etc. is 'monitored' and articles which contain a modicum of original research are indexed in the Bibliography. This sounds a very useful resource for the researcher.

However, I was sorry to learn that road transport is less than well covered, and that the Transport Ticket Society *Journal* is on the 'defaulters list', having no monitor at all. At a pinch, the Managing Editor of said *Journal* (my goodself) could add 'monitor' to his portfolio, but it would be nice if someone else would take this on – after all, the R&RTHA and TTS have several members in common. Having said that, Roger Atkinson is absolutely right – whilst the TTS has avid consumers of the results of research, it is the supply side of the equation that gives cause for concern. Sadly, the burden for any monitor might not be all that great.

Nothing new in that, I suppose, but it does highlight a similar imbalance in the R&RTHA's focus, and, perhaps a challenge for the future. *Newsletter*, Business Meeting presentations and the Symposia tend to accent the results of research, rather than how you reach that happy destination. I joined the Association after attending the immensely useful "Getting into Research" 1999 Symposium, and whilst it is informative and entertaining to hear or read the results of research, it is expanding on research sources, skills and the network of contacts that I am keener on. Time marches on and I would like to get some of my insignificant researches completed and published before the No.11 comes along. Reinventing wheels is not on the agenda if I can avoid it.

Hence a plea: please bring the R&CHS *Bibliography* out from under the bushel and allow its light to shine very brightly indeed.

Grahame Boyes gave another publishing genre as being poorly represented in the Bibliography – local history journals. I suspect there must be hundreds of these; there are at least three at my local library. One of these is *Bygone Kent* (mentioned on page 6 of *Newsletter* 38), which does have a useful online index at: www.bygonekent.co.uk/. Most issues contain one or more transport topics and these often provide a welcome human perspective, not always found elsewhere. The latest issue (Vol.27, No.1) is a good one with three articles on coastal shipping, one on the Lamberhurst Turnpike Trust, plus "It's a Girl's Life on the Buses". The latter by Nick Evans, author of "East Kent Explored", a history of the company (price £17 inc p&p from PO Box 201, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1WT) explores the role played by women at the East Kent Road Car over the years. This is a field also examined in Anna Rotondaro's "Women at Work on London's Transport 1905-1978", reviewed in *Newsletter* 40.

By dint of its formation in 1916, East Kent employed

conductresses from the start, many of whom stayed with the company all their working lives. In 1939, the first women drivers took to the road, but they lasted only until the end of the war, before resuming work at the back end again. Women drivers returned to East Kent in earnest in the early 1970s (beating London Transport by a year or so), but they also occupied many other roles behind the scenes. One was in the busy chart room opened in Ramsgate in 1950 to handle express coach bookings.

Something that struck me was the way uniform styles have evolved, and here you will excuse my lack of sartorial expertise in describing them. The 1916 clippie wore a cumbersome military-style tunic, long skirt and a rather large, peaked cap. By the 1920's, the cap had shrunk to a more practical size and the summer-issue dustcoat was daringly shorter, if scarcely a thing of beauty.

Military influence persisted through the 1940's and 1950's.



A 1966 photo (left) captures an updated style favoured by many bus companies at the time – military overtones again, but more of the parade ground, than the trenches. This comprised slacks and jacket, trimmed with contrasting piping, a blouse and tie, the ensemble topped off by an airline style (but again military-inspired) hat. This conductress also models the Setright 'Speed' Register referred to in *Newsletter* 44 (page 20).

The coming of the National Bus Company (NBC) heralded what was probably the nadir in platform staff uniform styling – dreary battleship grey slacks and jacket, the latter reminiscent of the sort of thing Chairman Mao used to wear. At least, the fairer sex was spared the faintly ridiculous threepenny-piece shaped caps issued to men.

Finally, to the present day. Lady drivers are kitted-out with the standard Stagecoach uniform – tailored slacks or skirt, blouse, plus cravat or tie, with an all-weather zipper jacket. Smart yet practical for an organisation whose driving staff are very much its public face.

If a female in the bus driving seat is an unremarkable sight in 2006, how many females occupy that other hot-seat – managing the bus operation, something unthinkable, perhaps 10 or 20 years ago?

In April last year, the trade press carried announcements of two senior appointments: Louisa Weeks became Operations Director at Oxford Bus Company (where our member Philip Kirk is MD), and Bryony Chamberlain was

appointed MD of nearby Stagecoach in Warwickshire. Coincidentally, April 2005 Newsletter 41 contained thought-provoking discussion on "Academic Qualifications in Transport History / Qualifications in Transport Competence" (pp4-8). John Edser commented pessimistically on the low profile enjoyed, if that is the right word, by transport studies, in the school curriculum and at universities.

I wondered what degrees Ms Weeks and Ms Chamberlain had taken. These turned out to be Law & Business Studies, and Mathematics respectively, in each case followed by in-house training and rapid "in at the deep end" immersion within Group businesses. Both seem to have thrived on it, and if this model is followed elsewhere, some of John Edser's fears may be unfounded.

Unfinished Business

GERRY SERPELL-MORRIS

With a little modification for the purpose of publication, the article which follows is the text of a talk given in December 2005 to a Manchester meeting of the Transport Ticket Society

One damp winter afternoon in 1955, when I was seventeen years old, my brother and I decided to go for a walk. As we were both keen bus enthusiasts, living in Bristol, it was not surprising that our steps took us to the local bus depot at Muller Road. Normally we would not have been able to enter the depot without being seen but this was a drizzly Sunday and we found it easy to get over the wall and round to the back. Here we found a low brick enclosure where the cleaners dumped the rubbish from the vehicles and without any real purpose in view we began to pick out the attractively coloured punch tickets which were in use at the time and set them out on the wall in numerical order of the fare values. After half an hour we each had quite a range of values and the pastime had become competitive as each of us sought out specimens to fill gaps. When we finally went home we took the tickets with us and thus began an interest that has remained with me to this day.

It was not long before I discovered, and became a member of, The Ticket and Fare Collection Society and after this my collection grew rapidly. Although I now collected from all over the U.K. it was my Bristol tickets which interested me the most. Some lucky publicity about my hobby in local newspapers and on radio resulted in some spectacular finds and purchases, including a hoard of early tram tickets. Collecting bus and tram tickets was, however, thought by many at the time to be a bit eccentric. Stamp collecting was much more acceptable. The only thing I envied the stamp collectors was their Stanley Gibbons' catalogue as it gave them a framework within which to structure their collections. Thus when my Bristol collection had reached just over a thousand specimens and a kind Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company inspector had lent me an old book of Company specimen tickets from the First World War period, in my innocence, I considered that I had enough information to construct a Gibbons-like catalogue.

In June 1958 I completed a forty five page document rather grandly entitled 'A Treatise on the Tickets of The Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company'. This little book contained illustrations of 122 tickets in twelve black and white photographs which a friend of mine took on glass plates using his enlarger as a copying stand. Looking back at this effort which I typed laboriously on an ancient typewriter purchased in Bath market for three

pounds I feel quite proud of what I achieved. On very little information most of my dating was fairly good, but the diversity and large number of tickets which had actually existed was unknown to me.

In the autumn of 1959, I obtained a place at Redland College to train as a teacher and time for my hobby diminished rapidly. A new career, marriage, a move abroad and two sons ensured that the tickets remained in store. Finally a developing interest in restoring classic cars brought about the decision to sell my Bristol Collection to Bristol City Museum in 1971 to provide funds for the replacement of a hood on a vintage Austin 7.

In 1995 my second wife, who knew very little about my ticket interests of so many years before, suggested that we attend a vintage bus rally at Cobham. It was at this event that my interest in road passenger transport returned like a recurring disease. Although I fought it for a while in June 1996 I rejoined what was now The Transport Ticket Society and began a new collection. In 1997 I discovered that the archives of the now defunct Bristol Omnibus Company had been deposited in the Bristol Record Office. I went to inspect these and was amazed to find a collection of ticket sample books from the old ticket office in Host Street and outlying depots containing a huge quantity of ticket samples from early 1920's onwards. In the Bristol Industrial Museum I also found the old Bristol Tramways book which had been lent to me in the 1950's, together with my old collection, and both were made available to me on loan. On being given permission to photograph the Bristol archive in the Record Office and with modern photocopyers (and now a scanner and laptop) to enlarge my photographs to real ticket size it soon occurred to me that it was now possible to achieve a Gibbons-style catalogue in the form of a replica collection. This huge and comprehensive collection of replica tickets now also includes copies from the W.H.Bett collection and the collections of many T.T.S. members who have kindly assisted me. In the course of this work it became obvious that no individual collection is strong in all periods of ticket design throughout the Company's history. It is only when one large collection is put together in the form of the replicas that a sufficient pattern emerges to enable one to make sense of some of the more unusual issues. Working from the replica collection I have been able to write an account of the "Ticket Designs of the Bristol Tramways & Carriage Company Ltd from 1875 to 1958. This is in two parts; Part One; "The Tramways" and Part Two; "The Omnibuses". Both parts are also available on CD.

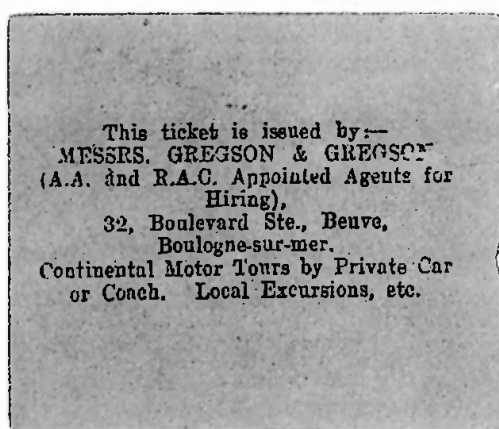
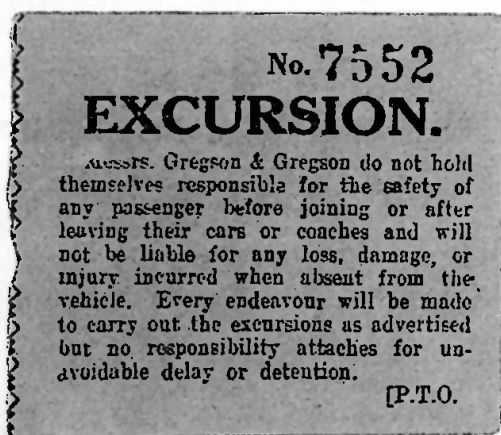
Because of the complexity of design and/or the huge number of tickets in use during some periods I have not attempted to list all the fare values of types known. What the work seeks to achieve is a means for the collector to arrange a collection in reasonable chronological order by recognising the styles of tickets in use at a particular time. Further it must be realised that whilst it is possible to make fairly accurate decisions about when a particular design came into use it is much more difficult to assess when a design disappeared completely. This is due in some part to the practice of the Bristol Company of using up old stocks of tickets to fill in fare values many years after the designs had become generally obsolete. Finally it behoves all of us to remember that as historian/collectors we seek to impose an order retrospectively on issues of tickets, the original introduction of which may have been much more random than we would like to believe.

Some issues which have arisen as a result of my researches remain. Was I right to sell my original collection to a museum? When I first contacted the Bristol City Museum in 1997 to remind them that I had deposited my collection with them in 1971 they had no idea where it was. Some days later they contacted me to say it had been moved to the new Industrial Museum when the dockside premises had become available. When I went to actually see the curator and pick up the tickets, it having been agreed I could have them on loan, I discovered they were stored in a filing cabinet at the back of a huge store and had only seen the light of day twice in twenty seven years. This is not surprising when one considers that museums do not, on the whole catalogue such items; so only the intrepid researcher will ever discover their whereabouts.

On the other hand if I had sold them privately in 1971 they would not have been available to borrow and use for my researches. The W.H.Bett collection in the Birmingham City Library is catalogued and made available for perusal on application. However the security is poor and it is obvious that over the years items have disappeared from it. Undoubtedly the Bristol Record Office was the best organised. The Bristol Tramways items it holds are well catalogued and whilst security is tight I was offered every assistance to do my research. It would be nice to think that we could look forward to leaving our collections to such institutions but I fear that large country wide ticket collections would not be welcomed. Most record offices are only interested in material which is very specific to their locality.

I have created for myself an additional problem for although my replica collection has no intrinsic value, being nothing in fact but modern bits of printed paper, it is the most comprehensive unique history of the Bristol Tramway's ticket designs in existence. Will the Bristol Record Office want it? I have no idea as yet. One day I will enquire and if they refuse it what then? As to original tickets in lifetime collections, perhaps they are better split up after the collector's death and left to friends or sold off to those still interested enough to be delighted to have them. The problem with this solution is that we are a diminishing body of collectors. I have no idea whether my tickets will have any interest to anyone as a gift, or any financial value to my widow in twenty years time if I am lucky enough to live that long. One can only continue to pursue the hobby for its present enjoyment employing the Buddhist philosophy of living every moment for its present value.

Gregson & Gregson, Boulogne-sur-Mer



In the 2005 Symposium papers which have now been published, there is a sentence about half way through Bert Morris's History of the Automobile Association: There was a significant growth in calls for overseas travel assistance with relatives wishing to visit the war graves and the Association established links with James Gregson a shipping agency in Boulogne who were to remain as AA European Agent until the 1990's.

Illustrated here are the back and front of an Excursion ticket issued by Messrs. Gregson & Gregson of Boulogne. Dating is rather uncertain – unlikely to be later than the 1950s; possibly from the 1930s. Note that the firm was a Continental agent for the Royal Automobile Club (RAC), as well as the AA. Also that it provided "Continental Tours by Private Car or Coach. Local excursions etc."

Ed.RA

Book Reviews

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR DEVA?

Edited by Emma Stuart MA, Chester History and Heritage
222 pages fully illustrated

The Society has received a limited number of copies of this work which has been produced by Chester City Council with support from the Big Lottery Fund. It describes the activities of its citizens in pursuance of the war effort in 1939-45.

Unlike the Merseyside towns less than 20 miles to the north, Chester escaped intensive enemy bombing, suffering from a few bombs and land mines which were ditched by bombers returning from raids on Liverpool. Damage and casualties were happily minimal. Nevertheless the local population were mobilised for air raid precautions, fire service and, of course, the manufacture of a great deal of warlike material, local industries being adapted to produce many unfamiliar items using mainly female labour.

The book explains in some detail the many administrative measures which were applied to the civilian population which are rarely described in works of this kind – the identity cards, ration books, issue of gas masks and the blackout regulations. There are fascinating extracts from contemporary diary entries and descriptions of the many voluntary duties carried out by citizens of all ages who, at the same time, worked at full time jobs. Tributes are given to those who served in the Home Guard, Women's Land Army, Auxiliary Fire Service, Women's Voluntary Service and the various voluntary ambulance, first aid and nursing services. Eaton Hall, seat of the Duke of Westminster, was used as a military convalescent hospital in the early part of the war, treating British and French survivors of the evacuation from Dunkirk. The Duke leased part of the extensive Eaton Park to the War Department and the formal gardens were given over to the production of food. The hospital was showered with incendiary bombs due to the action of a Norwegian 'quisling' (traitor) who was employed as a physiotherapist.

There are detailed accounts of enemy aircraft which crashed around the city, a description of the shooting down of a parachute land mine before it reached the ground, blowing out hundreds of windows but avoiding the devastation which would have been caused had it landed. There are also tales of German and Italian prisoners of war working on neighbouring farms. Several stayed in England after the war was over and married local girls.

For those who lived through those troubled times this book will doubtless revive long forgotten memories. Younger readers may well be astonished of the extent to which the civilian population was involved in the war effort and, in the earlier years of the war, exposed to frequent danger from enemy air attacks.

T B Maund

INTERMODAL FREIGHT TRANSPORT

David Lowe, Elsevier; 276 pages, illustrated, colour,
ISBN 0750659351 £49.99

This is an extremely comprehensive compendium of information, both historical and current, that deals with all aspects of intermodal transport in a most informative way. The book draws on the author's extensive background research and knowledge of the transport world to produce an authoritative publication that traces the development of intermodalism from its earliest days through the containerisation revolution of the second half of the last century to the sophisticated systems of today.

All forms of surface intermodal transport are considered – road, rail, channel tunnel, inland waterways, short sea shipping and container shipping. The scope of the author's research extends beyond the UK and mainland Europe to embrace intermodalism in North America, Asia and Australia.

Technical innovations such as the various forms of road / rail interchange now available and alternative systems for moving containers and swap bodies on inland waterways are fully described and compared. The book takes an optimistic approach towards the development of intermodal transport, which is seen by politicians and legislators as something to be encouraged as a means of easing pressure on national road networks and helping to reduce the impact of freight transport on the environment.

Clearly David Lowe sees intermodal transport as a "thing of the future" – a view strongly supported by the European Community and to a degree by the UK government. He chronicles in detail the history of EC legislation intended to encourage the more widespread use of intermodal (or combined) transport and explains the various forms of grants and development funds available in the EC and in the UK. However, he recognises that its role is inevitably limited by the physical restrictions on transferring of traffic from road to other modes and reminds the reader that most of the EC's predicted growth of 60% in heavy goods traffic by 2013 will continue being carried by road, which will, according to the EC, remain "the backbone of inland surface transport."

The author also takes a peep into the future. He speculates on the possible impact of the Working Time Directive in encouraging the use of intermodal transport as a means of maximising the use of drivers (an increasingly scarce resource) by shifting the long distance haul to rail and confining the driver to local collections and deliveries. Recent independent research by bodies such as the FTA would suggest that the flexibility that has been built into the regulations is enabling industry to find inventive ways of absorbing the impact without major operational change.

The book also deals with the contentious issue of how domestic and foreign-based commercial vehicle operators might pay more fairly for their use of roads throughout the EC and considers the cost impact of the proposed UK

Lorry Road User Charge (abandoned since the book's publication) and the new motorway tolling schemes (such as the German MAUT). It remains to be seen whether the author's prediction that higher costs will encourage a shift to intermodal transport will come true.

The parts of the book that deal with rail-freight operations are a mine of useful information on the various technical developments that have occurred in rail transport in the recent past. These include:

The development of rolling highways (where the complete road vehicle is driven onto the train – used extensively on transalpine routes)

Piggyback operations where the trailer is lifted onto specially designed rail vehicle for the long distance haul (including an account of the failed attempt to introduce such a system in the UK 10 years ago through the Piggyback Consortium)

The ill-fated Central Railway project - an ambitious scheme intended to provide a means of moving large numbers of lorries by rail from North West England via the Channel Tunnel to France

As is inevitable with a book that deals with a complex and wide ranging subject as comprehensively as this, it is not an easy read. The author's attention to detail does lead to a degree of repetition, with some topics covered to varying depths in several different sections. The book would also have benefited from some contributions from

businesses that use intermodal services and from potential users and operators. After all, the only way that the true benefits of intermodal transport will be realised will be for industry to have the confidence to change. The experiences of satisfied users may help to convince those that are "sitting on the fence".

David Mitchell

THE LONDON BRICK COMPANY

Bill Aldridge

Trans-Pennine Publishing Ltd, 1998 and 2003, 52pp fully illustrated Softback £7.95 ISBN 1 903016 37 1

This is not a new book, but I can easily appreciate why it has run to a second edition. It is good. It is a book in the Nostalgia Road Publications series, and it is primarily about the London Brick Company's lorries (and ancillary vehicles) over a period of many years. But there is a great deal of background. It tells us the rudiments of brick manufacture, about the location of brickworks and the handling of bricks. It is interesting to read in this book that mechanical handling was applied at an earlier date to the stacking of bricks in furnaces, than it was to stacking them on lorries. But in all processes, mechanisation brought a huge economy in arduous labour.

The economic background and its impact on the company, acquisitions by the company and changes in control of the company are covered. The perception of the company's operations in various contexts makes this a very worthwhile book.

RA

Book Notices

HALIFAX CORPORATION TRAMWAYS

Eric Thornton and Stanley King
LRTA Publications, 9 Hinderwell Road,
Scarborough YO12 4BD, 142 pages, A4 format, hardback,
fully illustrated, ISBN 0 948106 31 X, £19.99 UK post paid

One of the significant gaps in British tramway history has long been the tramways of Halifax. Various aspects have been covered in articles in 'Tramway Review' and elsewhere, and there have been important references in the writings of Geoffrey Hilditch. Now the well-known author Stanley King has taken the text originally prepared by Eric Thornton and produced a full history of a system which ran from 1898 to 1939 over some of the hilliest terrain traversed by any tramway system in Britain. Neighbouring Bradford and Huddersfield both ran steam and horse trams before electrification, but Halifax tramways ran with electric power from start to finish.

The track layout, shown in plans in the front inside cover, shows how constraints were imposed by the steep gradients and tortuous valleys. Accidents included two double deck cars being blown over by gale-force winds on the Queensbury route; later designs of car incorporated a wind-deflecting domed roof profile. The final batch of 'deluxe' cars were a triumph of design in terms of stability, comfort and pushing to the limit the Ministry of Transport requirements for double-deck four-wheeled narrow gauge tramcars.

Among several great personalities referred to is Councillor (later Alderman) A H Gledhill, chairman from 1928, a cash register and time recorder clock manufacturer, who made strenuous efforts to redeem the tramways' finances. His policy initially was to cut back progressively the unremunerative outer sections of routes and so although Halifax had only seven main routes, there is a long list of abandonment dates.

Two 1912 trolleybuses were bought secondhand from Dundee during the first world war for a service from Pellon to Wainstalls but were used as tramway welding support vehicles at first. They ran in passenger service only from 1921 to 1926, having been joined by a new vehicle that ran for only two years. And there are many references to independent bus services competing with the tramways from the 1920s onwards.

Numerous photographs and diagrams capture the character of this far-spreading tramway system, and a specially-commissioned cover painting by Ashley Best gives the atmosphere and the later livery. For me the book pulled together many threads of information into an informed and coherent story; it also made me want to go and spend time exploring this remarkable if sometimes rather grim part of West Yorkshire.

Ian Yearsley

CARRIERS AND COACHMASTERS TRADE AND TRAVEL BEFORE THE TURNPIKES

Dorian Gerhold, Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Chichester, 2005
270 pp.; fully illustrated; ISBN 1 86077 327 3; £19.99

Dorian Gerhold has written an important book about a period of road transport about which relatively little has so far been researched or published. He examines the London carriers and stage-coach men and their customers from the 1650s to the 1760s when the turnpikes began to have a significant effect. And in doing so he brings to light much detail to demonstrate that even in the 17th and 18th centuries, foundations were being laid of the road transport industry as it exists today.

It might be thought that this is merely an extension of the account given by this author with the late Professor Theo Barker in their book 'The rise and rise of road transport, 1700-1990', published by Macmillan in 1993 and by Cambridge University Press in 1995. In the introduction to that book the authors said: "There has been general agreement that road transport improved in the half century or so before the coming of the railways; but even in that period it is the increasingly fast and frequent stage coaches with their relays of horses which have caught the attention of historians, rather than the less spectacular and ungainly stage waggons and the great variety and quantity of goods they carried. Before that period it has often been assumed that the roads were in so bad a state that road transport was necessarily unreliable and expensive."

Dorian Gerhold's new book however delves much more deeply, not least by using the work of Thomas Delaune, who published a list of carriers and coachmen serving London in 1681. London then dominated England more than ever before or since, having in about 1700 one ninth of its population, three-quarters of its foreign trade, nearly half its merchant fleet, its largest concentration of industrial workers and its seat of government. Extensive use has also been made of the records of the Courts of Chancery and Exchequer and of probate inventories. Some of these records are now indexed on the internet, although as the author has been researching this book for some twenty years much of his work will have been done without its aid.

Advertisements and diaries of passengers have been used as sources on coachmasters and their services. And there is a great deal of information about fares and services. There is also a whole chapter on passengers. Although the nobility travelled in their own coaches, stagecoach passengers were mostly from the gentry and "what may be called 'the middling sort'" though servants often travelled, sometimes outside, and there is a record of two prostitutes who at the journey's end proved unable to pay.

He does not say so much about the horses themselves, although from the information he gives it would appear that they were required for the same three basic categories, walking, trotting and galloping, as in late-Victorian times. To what extent they were bred rather than simply bought for specific tasks is not explored.

The later development of steel springs and the improvement in roads brought about a speeding-up of

stage coach services without significantly increasing the numbers of horses required, even when in the 1830s some were said to travel at 11 miles per hour. Packhorses seem to have been made redundant around the 1750s as a result of flying wagons made possible by better roads.

From the 1750s the carrying trade continued on a trend of rising productivity and despite the creation of a canal network. "As more rivers became navigable and canals were built, road transport increasingly specialised in what it was best at, and it came to serve those needing rapid conveyance of high-value, low-weight items more effectively than ever."

All in all, he establishes that long before turnpiking, there was a large network of London carriers, and a good network of stage coaches. Most of the goods transported were on wheeled vehicles, and packhorses were used more because of their speed than because of any restrictions on wheeled vehicle access. Regularity of all types of service was good, and it is recorded that the Kendal packhorse services were expected to be punctual to the hour. Stage coaches did not cease in winter, as often asserted, and main roads from London were not impassable. A substantial proportion of goods, probably by far the greater part if measured by value rather than by volume, was carried by road rather than by water.

Nevertheless the state of the roads did interfere with road transport, and the large differences between the summer and winter timings of stagecoaches confirms this. There were a few places, including Leeds, which seem to have been inaccessible by wheeled vehicles at reasonable cost. But towns with no water transport at all, such as Frome, could nevertheless flourish on trade with London.

Looking back earlier, Gerhold says that there is no evidence of public carrying services by road until the last decade of the 14th century, though a large consignment forming a full load for a cart or packhorse team could be sent. Yet it was only regularity of services that provided the economic basis for stabling and feeding the large numbers of horses required, and while the basic London carrying network appeared in the 15th century, the widespread network may not have been in place until the 16th century. But it all contributed, not only to the growth of provincial industrial England, but to the growth of the capital itself.

The author and his publisher are to be congratulated on an important contribution to scholarship which is also eminently readable and splendidly presented.

Ian Yearsley

RITCHIES OF HETTON-LE-HOLE

Bob Tuck, Yarm: the author, 2005
129pp; illustrated; fleet list; ISBN 0952193868
£15.95 (hardback)

This well-known author brings his familiar skills to the story of a family firm which remains in family ownership and which exhibits a number of the features which add to the interest of road haulage history. With its origins in retail trade the necessary employment of horses and carts brought the family into road transport operations, and the founder's natural engineering skills and careful

acquisition of a large site at Hetton laid the necessary foundations for the next generation's move into mechanised road transport after the Great War. Initially this took the form of charabanc operation with two Karriers and a newly-rebodied ex-Royal Flying Corps Crossley. However, in the early 1930s, passenger work was given up in favour of concentration on the potentially more reliable weekday business of road transport.

For the Ritchies, as for some other hauliers, the addition of ballast traffic seemed a wise move and they set up the Hetton Sand & Gravel Co Ltd in 1934, the size of their site enabling the erection of a grading and washing plant, which continued to operate into the 1970s. A variety of marques was purchased in the 1930s, with Vulcans, then Commers coming to predominate into the 1960s, although a number of Thornycrofts followed the first one

purchased in 1939. An unusual purchase in 1952 was that of two second-hand *proctors*. Between 1939 and 1958, loading shovels and *dumppers* were also bought, for the sand and gravel work. The first articulated unit, a Leyland Marathon, arrived in 1975, followed by an ERF artic in 1976, the first of numerous examples of this marque, which have been joined in the new century by MAN artics and rigids.

Details of the traffic carried over the decades are given, and the chronology of family involvement. Although this is far from a photograph-and-captions history, there are many interesting illustrations, not the least of which is the firm's membership certificate from the 1930s embodiment of the Road Haulage Association.

Richard Storey

McAdam and the Metalled Roads

ALAN EARNSHAW

I was prompted to write following the article on Macadam by Roy Larkin's article in Newsletter 44, as this erstwhile road builder not only gave us the saying tarmacadam, but he also provided the term 'metalled road' as well. His fame is well known in the local history circles of Cumbria's Eden Valley and the North Pennines, as he was intimately connected with road-building in the area. During the 1970s, the Penrith Civic Society erected a cast-iron plaque to the front railings of Cockell House, Drovers Road, Penrith, which reads 'John Macadam, General Surveyor of Roads, lived here c.1820.' Meanwhile, a nearby street bears the name 'Macadam Way'.

The Cumbria Record Office in Kendal has no documentary evidence to support the claim of McAdam's residence in Penrith, but there are several records in connection with his new road from Penrith over Hartside Top (1903 feet) to Alston and Hexham, which is today the A686 and one of the highest 'A' roads in England. A plaque erected by the local council on the summit car park in front of the Hartside Café also records the work he undertook on this road for the Alston Turnpike Trust. The archives of Alston Turnpike Trust are in the Admiralty records in the Public Record Office at Kew, since the work was actually undertaken by the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital (Derwentwater Estates). The operating business of the hospital trust was the London Lead Company, who had mines in South Tynedale, Teesdale, Weardale, and along the East Fellside of the Eden Valley. Massive road programmes were built to connect the dales of the North Pennines, and the roads that still run over Hartside and Killhope, and between St. John's Chapel and Langdon Beck are the highest metalled public roads in the country. Other lead mine routes, now serving as Roads Used As Public Paths, cross the watersheds at even greater elevations, such as that crossing the Tees-Wear watershed between Burnhope and Teeshead and the one running from the gathering grounds of the South Tyne and Tees rivers at Moorhouse over to Knock in Cumbria's Eden Valley.

The Carlisle office of the Cumbria Record Office confirm that "Macadam supervised the building of new roads in the 1820s from Alston to Penrith (over Hartside), Alston to

Brampton and Alston to Hexham." The Act for making the roads was passed in 1823 so Macadam probably stayed in Penrith both while the surveying was undertaken for the Hartside Road and when the road was being built. A book by L. A. Williams, provides a good secondary source for information on McAdam's activities in the area. From this it appears that McAdam's extensive responsibilities in this part of England also included the road from Penrith to Greta Bridge, near Barnard Castle (now the A66T); the road from Penrith to Cockermouth (which is also part of the A66T); and the A6T road from Penrith to Carlisle. Record offices in Carlisle, Durham and Darlington also provide documentation that suggests that McAdam persuaded his principal employers in the region, the Commissioners of the Greenwich Hospital, to combine all the roads to their lead mines under a single Alston Turnpike Trust in 1824.

This trust had responsibility for 130 miles of road, making it a large trust by English standards, it was also very well advanced as its road foundations were of the highest order. For a start, many of the roads followed routes laid out by Roman surveyors two millennia earlier, and these gave long straight routes with very obvious origins. The Romans had not only built roads through the area such as Icter II (the A66) and the Maiden Way, but they had also provided a network of military roads connecting with Hadrian's Wall running along the northern edge of the North Pennine Orefield. The Romans had mined lead locally as well, and mining continued down through the dark ages. In the 1300s, Aldstone Moor (Alston) was known to house the King's Silver Mines, and large quantities of highly refined lead-silver were taken to the Royal Mint along some of the roads that McAdam later 'improved'.

When he began his improvements, copious quantities of hard limestone were available as the core material for the new road beds, much of it being already broken into small pieces having been hacked from the lead mine workings as 'deads' (un-productive material). Large quantities of very hard Northumberland Basalt (whinstone) were also provided from the heaps of 'mine deads' in some locations. Yet there was another type of material that the

thrifty London Lead Company provided to McAdam, as millions of tons of it were literally littering the hillsides of the north dales – this being fluorspar! This was the galena bedrock that surrounded the metalliferous deposits that were being exported. The 'dead' rock and associated crystalline spar had to be separated from the ribbons of lead threading through the galena, and this was done in a series of processes. At first it would be broken away by hammer (buckers), work that was quite often done by children as young as nine-years-old, who worked on the hill-side dressing floors in all weathers and often did so in scanty clothing and bare feet. Once the bulk of the bedrock had been broken away, stamping and sieving machinery would be used in huge mills, such as the one at Park Mill, Killhope; now a visitor attraction alongside the A689 between Wearhead and Nenthead. The resulting dross would then be further sorted out by a series of washing and sieving operations, so that even the finest particles of lead could be extracted. The result was that the mine companies had thousands upon thousands of tons of waste material, ranging in constituency from muddy slime to rocks about two-feet square.

As the mine owners were economical in recovering every particle of lead, they were also keen to turn the waste into a valuable resource as well, and where better than road building. So, as McAdam carried out his improvements on the Alston Turnpike Trust routes, he was told to use the

waste rock from the North Pennine Orefield, as the basis for the aggregates that he bonded with tar in order to make a firm, and relatively non-slip surface. His road at Hartside (between Alston and Penrith) was a specific challenge; its summit was 1903 feet above sea level and therefore experienced all manner of weather conditions. A lasting legacy of his roads was the fact that small particles of spar, and even bits of metal (such as lead, silver and gold that had escaped the extraction process), glinted out from the surface when the sun's rays caught it. When visitors to the area asked why this was, locals would have great fun telling them that these were metal roads, it is even thought it is where the saying that 'the streets are paved with gold' may have originated too, but that is purely an anecdotal tale.

There are two principal histories on McAdam: The first being by Robert Harry Spiro, John Loudon McAdam: Colossus of Roads (PhD Thesis, Edinburgh 1950); and W. J. Reader's work, McAdam: The McAdam Family and the Turnpike Roads 1798-1861 (1979). Both contain detailed tables of the trusts that employed McAdam and his sons, but neither of them include the Alston trust, though Reader does mention the Whitehaven Trust in Cumberland, and the Appleby and Kendal, Heronsyke and Eamont Bridge, and Milnthorpe (or Millthorpe) trusts in Westmorland. It should also be mentioned that there was no national post of General Surveyor of Roads.

World-Wide Coverage

One snippet about a Brussels tram ticket doesn't make you an 'international' magazine! (*Newsletter* 44, back page). When you serialise something about the history and development of motorways across the world – and the various and wondrous uses of school buses in India, USA and South Africa – then maybe *Clive Akerman*

people in the world are likely to have serious collections of Uruguayan licence stamps. But a book on them has been produced in the USA; and a review copy was sent to Clive. Although there is growing recognition of *Newsletter's* book review pages, they have not yet attained quite such international kudos. *Ed. RA*

But Clive then went on to give some useful information on sources of information in the Forest of Dean. So, just to show that *Newsletter* does not spurn overseas items – it simply does not receive many – here is an illustration from Clive's own magazine. (He is Editor of the *Revenue Journal of Great Britain* – referred to in *Newsletter* 44, p.4). It is of Tracción Sangre. It was unearthed for the review of a book on a mildly abstruse topic, the *Patente de Rodados* de Departamento de Montevideo. This was a form of Uruguayan vehicle tax in force from 1928 to 1963. It embraced even 'blood-drawn' vehicles as here illustrated. The review in the *Revenue Journal* Vol. XVI, No.2, September 2005, did confess that only about seven



Britain's New 3ft 6in Gauge Tramway

RON PHILLIPS

Location

The Pier at Southport is just under one mile long and was opened in 1863. It remained in use until it was closed in the late 1990s for safety reasons. Fortunately, it has been reconstructed to a high standard and was reopened to the public in 2002. The first part of Southport Pier is over what is now dry land, although at one point it crosses the waters of a marine lake. The second part, commencing at the present Marine Drive, is only over the sea at high tide.

In its present form the pier has an entrance at the Southport Promenade, adjacent to a large traditional style Pier Pavilion which is operated as an amusement arcade and café by a private company. It then continues seawards across the reclaimed foreshore area as far as the Marine Drive. Here there is a slight change in level in order to give enough headroom for vehicles to pass beneath the Pier, and there are staircases to allow public access. There is also a gate, which is locked in the evening and night time to prevent public access to the part of the Pier across the sands. This section extends out to a new modern pavilion, operated by Sefton Borough Council under the control of a Piermaster. The pavilion is rectangular and functional, and contains a cafe, public conveniences, a shop, and an exhibition area. On one side large panoramic windows give a fine view of the coastline towards Ainsdale, and there is information on the wild life to be seen there.

Some History

Southport Pier was one of the earliest and longest of its type. Operated by the Southport Pier Company, the need for a means of transport along its deck was identified from the outset, and a cable-hauled tramway was constructed on the south (Ainsdale) side. The single line was fenced off from the public promenade deck. Eventually this line was modernised and electrified, using a third rail conductor. In 1935, some six months after the closure of the town's tramway system, Southport Corporation acquired the Pier from the Company, and the following year it was decided to further modernise the tramway with new car bodies constructed locally on the underframes of the existing toastrack style cars. As the line was single, the cars were coupled to form a "train" whose length could be varied in line with the traffic which presented itself. The new cars had the appearance of the newly introduced Blackpool centre entrance "Rail-coaches."

After the nationalisation of electrical supply in 1948, it was no longer economic to buy DC traction current to work the line, so it closed in 1950 to be reconstructed as a "rail-way". A new diesel driven locomotive and train of carriages was built with the help of the proprietor of the Lakeside Miniature Railway (LMR), whose line ran from Southport's Pleasureland amusement park along the side of the Marine Lake to pass beneath the Pier at the Aquarium (now demolished) to terminate on the northern side of the Pier. The LMR also supplied expertise and rolling stock for the Festival of Britain "Emmett Railway" in London in 1951.

The new streamlined train was painted in silver and green, and was named the "Silver Belle". In due time it

was replaced by another diesel train, of a less stylish design, and this ran into the 1990s. The line then ceased operation, the pier was closed to the public and the old decking and the railway track removed. The pier was then reopened in stages with new decking of a high standard, and including a tramway track laid centrally and for the first time, unfenced. Once the whole pier reconstruction project was completed and the new pavilion opened, it was made known that there would be a new tram (an artist's impression showed a car similar to Manchester's Metrolink.) However, a "Dotto Train" (a small tractor-like rubber tyred "locomotive" with several toastrack trailers) was used on the pier, following a central course along the tram track, which is a single line throughout. This vehicle operated during the season only.

At the beginning of 2005 the local press carried the story that the company building the new tram had gone out of business, but that it was hoped eventually to restore a railed service on the pier. The "Dotto Train" ran again.

Municipal Trams return

On Monday 1st August 2005, I went to Southport with my wife. At about 4 pm, we decided to walk along the Promenade, and I caught sight of a blue tram approaching the landward end of the pier. We went to look at it and found that a number of people were sitting inside, and fearing that the line had been open for some time I asked one of three men standing by the leading platform "How long has this tram been running for?" I was extremely surprised to be told "You are the first passengers." I suggested that this was not so, but was assured by the three men that this was indeed the inaugural run for the public, and that the car had only just arrived and had been tested.

At 4.25 pm the car set off for the end of the pier. As it started to move the official in charge, the Piermaster, told the 35 or so passengers present that they were the first farepaying passengers to ride on the car. There was no other ceremony, and no photographs were taken to record this moment when an electrically driven municipally owned tram, on tracks laid to the gauge of 3 feet 6 inches, recommenced public service in Great Britain.

The car is articulated and seats 76 passengers. There is a door at each end, on the left hand side, and a third door at the seaward end which allows wheelchair access. A low skirt hides both the bogies and the 96V batteries which provide power. These are recharged overnight by cables from a pillar at the seaward end of the pier, where the car is kept overnight (This part of the pier is closed off each evening). Speed is low as the track is not fenced off, and is similar to that of the temporary "Dotto Train".

The car body incorporates all the features of the modern low floor bus, including fixed glazing, a powered ventilation system, individual upholstered seats, an abundance of yellow grab rails, dot-matrix destination signs etc. Tickets are issued by a conductor with a portable ticket machine whilst the car is in motion.