

ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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COVER PICTURE A view of Nethergate, Dundee
in the early fifties.

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CONFERENCE MATTERS

September 28th 2002

22nd BUSINESS MEETING

The 22nd Business Meeting of the Association was held at the Museum of British Road Transport Coventry on Saturday 28th September. Despite some disruption on the railways in the form of strikes and weekend engineering work, 18 members attended and 14 apologies were received.

A minute's silence was observed in recognition of the recent death of Tony Pomeroy. Professor John Hibbs, Chairman, announced that a celebration of Tony's life was to be held sometime during October. An Obituary was published in the last Newsletter (No.30).

The minutes of the 21st Business Meeting were approved, and Professor Hibbs then raised two matters which he had recently been called upon to deal with. David Flitton had approached him requesting help with a projected history of South Midland Motor Services. John felt that it was significant and gratifying that the Association had been approached in this way. Secondly, *The Times* for September 25th had carried an article stating that Britain's first motorised bus service had started in September 1897 at Bradford. Research for the "History of British Bus Services" had established that the first true motorbus service had started in Edinburgh on 19th May 1898. A letter had been sent to *The Times* asking for the source of their information. This item led to some discussion, and further notes are to be found on page 4 of this issue.

Hon. Secretary's Report

Gordon Knowles recorded that the level of membership was being maintained. In accordance with a decision taken previously, he had collected together various papers relating to the history of the R&RTHA and these were being deposited with the Kithead Trust for safekeeping. Our thanks were due to Peter Jaques for permitting this action. (See also page 4)

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Roger Atkinson said that he was pleased with the level of membership, only one associate member not having renewed, and several new members having joined. He had produced a new version of our publicity leaflet, reflecting the minor change in the society's title, new subscription rates etc. and a copy of the new leaflet was given to all present. They are freely available to anyone in a position to distribute them..

Roger referred the recent contact with the

Association from the Museum of London's Transport (re a film), and from David Flitton (re South Midland), and emphasised how the membership list distributed with Newsletter No.29 highlighted the diversity of interests amongst us..

Roger then drew attention to three recent publications which he put on display. One was the booklet produced by the Omnibus Society on the subject of the horse tramway undertakings in major British and Irish cities in the mid 1880s. (See Review page 5)

Hon Newsletter Editor's Report

Ron Phillips stated that cost of production had fallen by double sourcing the printing of the last two editions of Newsletter. The results were generally satisfactory, but future editions may be single sourced for technical reasons. Now that the Association was ten years old, and Newsletter publication had reached thirty, it was perhaps appropriate to produce an index, although this would not appear just yet. In view of the short time-span between the Business Meeting and the Symposium and Anniversary Dinner at Derby, Newsletter No.31 would be published in November or December, rather than be distributed at the Symposium.

Ron drew attention to the review in current issue (No.30) of a recently published book on Weymann, the bus bodybuilding firm. Whilst it had the usual pictorial review and description of the vehicles built, it also contained much information about the people and financial institutions behind the firm, and broke new ground in this respect.

Hon Research Coordinator's Report

Ian Yearsley was unable to be present, the weekend of the meeting coinciding with his 40th wedding anniversary. He had submitted a short written report which was concerned with polarity changes on trolleybus systems, and a television programme in which it was stated that "air travel was not a factor in killing off ocean liners, but air travel by jet plane."

(Although not raised at the meeting, it should be stated that travel by jet plane has also replaced long intercontinental rail and road routes.)

Report by the Working Party on 'Companion to British Road Haulage History'

This was presented by Richard Storey, in the absence of Professor John Armstrong. After six years, the project was nearing completion. It was anticipated that there would be five more monthly meetings by the Working Party. These had hitherto been held free of charges for the room used, but from November there was to be a charge, and the Association agreed to meet this cost for the remaining meetings.

Leaflets produced by the Science Museum were circulated to those present. The exact number of pages,

pricing etc. of the final product was discussed, but the main issues taken up by those around the table were the nature and description (captions) of the proposed illustrations, and the nature of the work itself (i.e. not the story of road haulage but a reference book). The Companion was seen as a "foundation stone upon which other writers could build".

Report by the Working Party on 'Companion to British Passenger Transport History'

The Chairman named the Working Party as himself, Corinne Mulley, Tony Newman, Richard Storey, Ian Yearsley, Andy Axton, John Birks, Alan Mills, Bob Tebb and Cyril McIntyre. The full title was to be "Companion to Public Road Transport History in Great Britain and Ireland".

Taxis (i.e. Hackney Carriages) were to be included, but 'mini-cabs' were not. The time-span was from Shillibeer (1829) to the year 2000, with earlier references if essential. The space allocation was to be approx. 75% buses and coaches, 15% tramways, 5% trolleybus, 2% taxis and the final 3% on definitions etc. Each entry would be approx. 250 words.

The Association was grateful to Corinne Mulley who was to take on the task of editing the work, and to Cyril MacIntyre (of Bus Eireann), who was to provide information on the bus industry in Ireland.

The Bibliography would have to be limited in view of the large amount published on the subject. A brief discussion followed, raising points such as the role of the dual purpose bus (goods and passengers), the carriage of parcels, the use of parcel vans by bus companies, Post buses and the carriage of mail in bags or in letter-boxes on trams and buses, and regulation.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.05 pm and reconvened at 2.10 pm. Roger Atkinson gave details of the bookings so far received for the Derby Symposium and Anniversary Dinner, and the date for the next Business Meeting and 2003 AGM was confirmed as **Saturday 8th February 2003**.

Museum British Road Transport Coventry

The Chairman asked Barry Collins to explain changes which were being made at the Museum.

Barry told us that our meeting was probably the last to be held in the Walter Starley Room for some time. A new front entrance was being built and would be shared with MIRA and a Warwick University based consultancy. Monies had also been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund to permit regular changes of the material on display. The new work was scheduled to be completed in September 2003.

We were assured that our February meeting could take place at the museum. Other items of inter-

est were that the Massey-Ferguson tractor plant collection was to come to the museum, which from April 2002 would become a full-blown trust, although retaining links with Coventry City Council.

The afternoon session continued with three presentations by members.

Roger Atkinson gave an illustrated talk on the subject of compensation in the 19th century relating to horse-drawn transport.

Michael Baines gave a talk entitled "Family Connections" which outlined the role in transport played by his father and grandfather, who were both involved in road haulage and coaching.

His grandfather for a short while owned and operated a "waggonette", a predecessor of the char-a-banc, being a vehicle based on a large motor car chassis. He sold this after a short time because of the difficulty of getting the money from his clients, and he learned that transport "is a commodity that you cannot repossess after it has been supplied."

His father too worked in road haulage, but then changed his employment to work for T.D. Alexander in Sheffield, a motor coach operator. Thomas Alexander was a nephew of the famous Walter Alexander, and came to England to work in the bus business on the understanding that he did not engage in such work north of the border. The Sheffield operation used the fleetname "Greyhound". Eventually, however, the business did go back to Scotland and was based in Arbroath.

Michael is at present working on a book about the T.D. Alexander company, which as well as coaching also engaged in road haulage.

Finally, **John Edsor** spoke of his student days working as a van boy for Lyons Cakes, based on their depot and factory at Chessington. From here bread and cakes were delivered to a wide area, using vans based on Morris Commercial and Thornycroft chassis, the latter being the "Sturdy" and "Nippy" types. Each van had a driver/salesman, and a "boy" was employed on the longer runs to help with the loading and delivery of the items.

Much of what was carried was to cover orders, but many extra items were carried to sell as required, and the drivers would call on shops to drum up any business they could. Many of the sales were for cash. At the depot, cakes were seen as superior to bread. (This notion must have come from the fact that the mark-up on cakes was superior to that on bread). The cakes came to Chessington from Lyons' bakery at Cadby Hall in large articulated vehicles owned by the Company. Bread (and doughnuts) were baked at Chessington.

John worked for 3/5⁴d. per hour, a figure which was enhanced by the long hours worked to give

a decent return to an unattached young man. One of the runs involved delivering cakes to a small baker's shop, and generated a reverse trade, with workers at Chessington placing orders for home baked loaves!

R&RTHA Papers

Deposited with Kithead Trust for safe-keeping are papers relating to the early history of the Association (when in the late 1980s it was an offshoot of the Railway & Canal Historical Society before its foundation as a separate entity in 1992) and copies of minutes of meetings and Newsletters for 1992-2002.

In addition there are copies of some papers presented by Messrs. Charles Klapper and C.E. Lee, including 'Development in the Bus Industry', Klapper (Inst. of Transport, Leeds, 9/12/47); 'The Influence of Area Agreements' Lee (Omnibus Society 28/2/42); 'Voluntary Organisation in the Passenger Road Transport Industry' Lee (Inst. of Transport, London, 28/3/47) and 'Some Aspects of Motor Bus Operation in Scotland' Klapper, (Omnibus Magazine 12/35).

Much of the latter item is included on pp.6 - 11 of this edition of Newsletter.

AFTERNOON & EVENING TOURS

By BLUE LINE

A leisurely tour—by BLUE LINE—of the pleasant countryside abounding on the outskirts of Wigan—Parbold, Hunter's Hill, Rufford, Mawdesley, Ashurst Beacon, Bispham, Rivington, Anglezarke, etc.—offers an ideal way of spending a summer afternoon or evening.

When you are next entertaining visitors you can be assured of their pleasant surprise if you include a run of this kind in your arrangements.

Touring in a BLUE LINE LUXURY SALOON, to seat four persons in comfort, means riding in a private car with a courteous and experienced chauffeur to receive your instructions.

The following rates covering time and distance are now specially introduced to cater for this kind of outing:

RATES: From any address in Wigan and return.

For 1 Hour	(10 Miles Tour)	-	-	5/-
" 2 Hours	(20 " ")	-	-	10/-
" 3 "	(30 " ")	-	-	15/-
" 4 "	(40 " ")	-	-	20/-

Fractions of an hour at proportionate Fares.

Excess mileage at 4½d. per mile.

Austin 20 h.p. Limousines, to seat 6/7 persons,
7/- per hour.

PHONE AT ANY TIME - - - WIGAN 2888

Middleton & Wood (1919) Ltd.,

3, KING STREET WEST, WIGAN.

EXTENDED HOLIDAY TOURS AT LOW INCLUSIVE RATES.

TAXI

At our September meeting, a number of issues were raised that need to be addressed in the proposed Companion to British Passenger Transport. One was the role of the taxi and hire-car in providing public transport

It is interesting to note that the said form of transport was a concern of the Municipal Tramways and Transport Association just before the Second World War. On these pages are reproductions of some leaflets put out by Wigan taxi proprietors, Middleton & Wood.

The Wigan General Manager opined "whilst I think the operation of such vehicles should be discouraged as much as possible, it is a fact that in Wigan they have had no effect on the Corporation's omnibus service.

"It is my opinion that given a quick omnibus service at reasonable fares, the public will use such a bus service rather than the cheap taxi cab, which entails much more trouble in that there must be three or four persons to make the taxi fare cheap, and usually it is necessary to put in a telephone call to hire a taxi."

He does not comment on the possible effects on the various inter-urban bus routes serving Wigan, nor the express and private-hire coach operators. (Also, railway passengers may well have been tempted by the Special Summer Rates shown on the leaflet on the next page.

On the left "Blue Line" invite customers to take a tour on the outskirts of Wigan. Interestingly, the Corporation buses at Wigan ran a tour

FARE LIST.

Charged from your Door to Destination within the Wigan Boundary.

For the First Mile, or any part thereof - - - - - **9d.**For each additional Mile after the First Mile - - - - - **9d.**For every third of a mile, or part of a third of a mile over and above any number of miles completed - - - - - **3d.****WAITING TIME—**

Where the Car is required by the hirer to stop either during or at the end of the journey, the driver shall be entitled to demand and take in addition to the fare for distance prescribed herein :—

For all such waiting time over and above FIVE MINUTES - - - - - **3/-** per hour or **3d.** for each five minutes.

JOURNEYS OUTSIDE THE WIGAN BOROUGH BOUNDARY.

Owing to the empty mileage that would otherwise make the fare uneconomical, we reserve the right to charge and take such fare as would be equivalent to the charge if the passenger(s) had hired the Car for at least half the distance actually travelled by the Car from leaving the Taxi Rank at Wigan Wallgate Station and returning thereto.

SPECIAL ATTRACTIVE FARES FOR OUTLYING TOWNS SUCH AS MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL, SOUTHPORT, BLACKPOOL, NORTH WALES, &c.

Super & Limousine Cars, Wigan.

SPECIAL SUMMER RATES TO THE HOLIDAY RESORTS

by Super Limousine Cars, with driver—First-Class Travel.

SUNDAY OR HALF-DAY.Go One Day,
Return Subsequent Date
(Each Way)

	Big Car.	Blue Line.	Big Car.	Blue Line
Blackpool	35/-	30/-	27/6	25/6
Manchester	25/-	20/-	18/-	15/-
Liverpool	25/-	20/-	18/-	15/-
Southport	25/-	20/-	18/-	15/-
Morecambe	45/-	38/-	40/-	33/6
Chester	35/-	30/-	27/6	25/6
Hoylake	30/-	27/-	25/-	22/6
Rhyl	70/-	52/-	60/-	48/9
Llandudno	80/-	65/-	70/-	60/-
Buxton	48/-	40/-	45/-	36/-
Windermere	75/-	60/-	65/-	54/-

Other Suggested Excursions :—**TROUGH OF BOWLAND, SHREWSBURY, BETTWS-Y.COED, HARROGATE, MATLOCK, PENRITH.**

Fares shown are from our Office, returning to Office.
Ferry Fees extra where payable.

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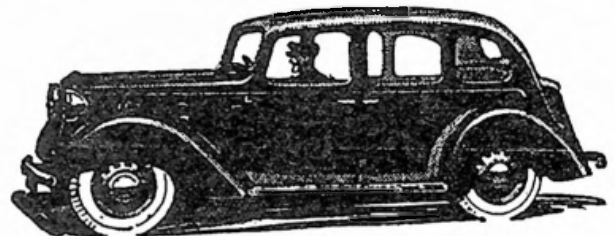
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WIGAN.

From Door to Destination—Night & Day

on summer Sundays, fare 9d., which was made up of three existing Corporation routes formed into a triangular tour, starting from the Market Square. Passengers could alight and rejoin the bus at certain stops. The service was described as "well patronised in fine weather."

Note on the leaflet on the left the fares are for "Big Car" and for "Blue Line". An excursion to see the Blackpool Lights by big car for a family of eight at 35/- would certainly be attractive.

TOPICS in the next edition of Newsletter (November 2002)

More on British Municipal Transport operators.

Major Bus Companies in Scotland

Taxis and Hire-cars

The wartime Auxiliary Bus Conductors.

The "First" British Motor Bus, Edinburgh or Bradford ?

Illustrations courtesy Kithead Archive

Motor Bus Operation in Scotland

Among the R&RTHA Papers mentioned on page 4 is the one entitled "Some Aspects of Motor Bus Operation in Scotland" by Charles F. Klapper, which was published in "The Omnibus Magazine" in December 1935. We are publishing extracts from this below, as part of our series surveying the road passenger transport groupings in Britain. The parts printed in *italics* are not from the original, neither are the series of notes which are appended, in explanation of changes made subsequent to the date of writing.

Bus operation north of the Cheviot Hills has a number of fascinating aspects. The distinctive features of Scottish operation include the interesting structure of the old-established Scottish Motor Traction group; extensive co-operation with municipalities by companies; tramway operation by bus proprietors; large Royal Mail and parcels businesses; the provision of numerous tours; largely by small proprietors and the linking of these with steamer trips in certain instances; the large number of extended tours operated in the season by proprietors operating from the English towns; substitutions of trams by buses; and the absence of railway financial interest in a number of the companies replacing train services.

In dealing with Scottish bus operation it must be remembered that bus routes depend on the distribution of population for regular all the year (or all the week, even) patronage. This is not obtainable on most Scottish routes, since the population is concentrated in the central rift valley between Glasgow and Edinburgh, in the rich agricultural lands around the latter city, and in Fifeshire. The remainder of the country is a wild waste of moorland which separates rather than connects the agricultural settlements and small towns. The whole population of Scotland is 4,842,554, and that of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen totals 1,870,247. This population in an area of 30,405 square miles compares with a density of 37, 500,000 persons in England in an area of 50,227 square miles.

Early Motor Buses in Scotland

A research by the Chairman of the Omnibus Society was made some time ago into early operation of buses in Scotland, and a town service in Edinburgh in 1897 would appear to have been an established fact. The Scottish capital thus had the first regular motor bus service in the world (1).

There is considerable interest attaching to other early Scottish motor bus ventures. The Scottish Motor Traction Co. itself was formed on June 14th 1905, and commenced bus operation immediately with

five double deck Maudslay vehicles operating to Cramont and Corstorphine. Previously Sir (then Mr.) William J. Thomson had operated a steam bus service in Edinburgh. A notable early feat was the building of 100 "Lothian" buses by the SMT from Maudslay parts. The operating area of the parent company is now confined to the south-east of Scotland, but a controlling interest is held in W.Alexander & Sons Ltd., Central SMT Co. Ltd, and Western SMT Co. Ltd., among other concerns. This development is mainly the result of stabilisation under the Road Traffic Act 1930, and the interest taken in the concern in 1929 by the LMS and LNE Railways. To provide for the entry of the railways to the ranks of the proprietors, the company was reformed on August 15th 1929 with a capital of £1,800,000.

An interest was taken in W.Alexander & Sons Ltd. of Falkirk, which was registered on May 23rd 1924, and in March 1930 the SMT purchased on behalf of Alexander the Scottish General Omnibus Co. Ltd., Scottish General (Northern) Omnibus Co. Ltd, Scottish Utilities Motors, Ltd, Caley Motor Engineering Co. Ltd., and other companies.

SMT Interest in Alexander

Also, control of the General Motor Carrying Co. Ltd. was transferred by SMT to Alexander on the same day: this is still maintained as a separate company.(2) It was registered on December 1st 1919 to take over the business of Alex Sturrock and others at Kirkcaldy. Bus services started in July 1913, and now extend throughout Fife. (*Wemyss and Kirkcaldy trams were also subsumed in the GMC., see below*)

The Pitlochry Motor Co. Ltd., formed in Edinburgh in September 1929, is another SMT associate worked by Alexander, but with specially allocated vehicles. It is an old-established concern and now operates 21 vehicles painted in the familiar blue and white livery and operating on services between Pitlochry, Perth, Aberfeldy etc., and on various excursions in the summer.

Perhaps the most interesting acquisition in this group was that of the Scottish General (Northern) Co., which in August 1930 took over the LNER bus services originally inaugurated by the Great North of Scotland Railway with a Ballater - Braemar route on May 2nd, 1904. There was a considerable number of these routes, originally worked with Milnes-Daimler vehicles, and the GNSR was one of the earliest railways really to understand the valuable asset of co-ordinated bus routes in extending the railway's sphere of influence into the most remote parts of its territory. The last vehicles to be bought by the LNER for these services were 20 seat Thornycrofts.

Alexander Municipal Services

The Alexander company operates two interesting city sections on behalf of municipalities - in the city and royal burgh of Perth, where the transport system was taken over in May 1934, and in Kirkcaldy, where on May 15th 1931, the Kirkcaldy Corporation Tramway system ceased to operate, as the Town Council decided to accept the offer of W. Alexander & Sons Ltd. to provide the whole of the public passenger transport service within the borough. The Corporation is to be paid £27,000 and £2000 per annum for 21 years. The tramway system was inaugurated on February 28th 1903, the Dysert extension being opened January 26th 1911. About 5¼ route miles on 3ft. 6ins. gauge were worked by 26 open top double deck cars. Wemyss & District Tramways Co. had running powers over the Kirkcaldy Corporation lines.

In March 1930, the motorbus department of the Wemyss company was purchased by the SMT, and handed to W. Alexander & Sons for operation early in 1931. SMT acquired a predominating interest in the Wemyss company by purchasing much of its stock, and on January 30th 1932 the Wemyss & District Tramways Co Ltd. discontinued working its system, and services were replaced by buses operated by the SMT.

Perth Corporation, on May 12th 1934, accepted an offer of £22,000 and £1500 per annum for 21 years from W. Alexander & Sons Ltd. in return for a lease of the city transport facilities. This saved the city a certain estimated loss of £42,500 between 1934-1941 in paying off old tramway debts. Actually Perth commenced bus operation as an adjunct to its tramways in May 1911, but the bus fleet consisted of only 8 vehicles in 1927. In the following year power was obtained to abandon the tramways, and this was done by Provisional Order during 1928. In August 1928, the Perth General Omnibus Co. Ltd, operating 12 buses and inaugurated in 1927, was taken over. The route mileage rose to 22 and the fleet to 32. Certain Perth and Dundee district routes continue to be SMT operated.

Arrangements were made last May for buses of W. Alexander & Sons Ltd. to replace the Falkirk and Dunfermline tramways at the end of this year. In February 1935 SMT made an offer to purchase the shares of the Fife Tramways Light & Power Co. and so obtain control from the parent company of 16½ route miles of Dunfermline & District Traction Company's tramways, and 6¼ route miles of Falkirk & District Traction Company's tramways. In 1930, the Dunfermline & District Tramways sold its bus business and 30 vehicles to Alexander, retaining protective fares for the trams and a restriction on season

tickets. The Traffic Commissioners may authorise the removal of these restrictions in view of the operation of all the local transport by SMT associates.

Throughout the period of its association with the SMT the Alexander company has been engaged in simplifying the position of subsidiaries; the most recent two to be absorbed were Aberdeen Suburban Transport Co. Ltd. (*originally a tramway*) and Bydand Motor Transport Co. Ltd, although these routes still are advertised separately in the public timetables.

In South-West Scotland

The Western SMT Co. Ltd was originally a BET concern formed in 1913 as the Scottish General Transport Company Ltd. Services started on January 1st 1914 and it had been brought to a paying basis by 1931, when the SMT evinced interest in it. Control was transferred to SMT in November of that year. The name was changed in June 1932, about when the SMT subsidiary Midland Bus Services Ltd. (founded by Mr. J. C. Sword at Airdrie) and a large number of other concerns, including Kilmarnock Corporation services, were transferred to it.

The Midland transaction actually took place on April 1st. The whole territory of south-western Scotland from Glasgow is assigned to it, but in practice this is severely modified by the district occupied by the only present Tilling & British interest in Scotland, the Caledonian Omnibus Company Ltd., which it was originally proposed to absorb. (3)

Services in Greenock

It may be mentioned here that there was no railway interest in the Scottish General Transport Co., which was not associated in the SMT railway group, but the LMS buses on Greenock - Largs service were worked by Scottish General employees in 1929-1930. The anomalous position thus arose that although the BAT and Tilling-BET groups have a broad agreement with both the LMS and LNER, neither of their Scottish subsidiaries, Scottish General Transport and Caledonian Omnibus Co. Ltd had concluded a local agreement, nor were the railways financially interested in these two. The Greenock Motor Company, however, which itself is a subsidiary of Scottish General Transport, made an arrangement with the LMS, which acquired a large share-holding interest. The Greenock Motor company also worked joint services with the LMS in the Glasgow, Greenock and Largs districts.

The Greenock Motor Services Company was originally incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1871 as the Greenock and Port Glasgow Tramways Co. Its name was changed to the present one on August 3rd 1928. Bus services were introduced on August 9th 1925, and tramways were finally abandoned on July

15th 1929. In November 1929, the Company jointly with the LMS, purchased the Gowrock Pullman Services from H. Whatmough. Control was transferred in October 1931, and on November 2nd 1931 the SMT took over these services along with the other Scottish General Transport services and the LMS buses and the LMS interest in the Ayrshire Pullman Services etc., the latter being merged with the Western SMT in due course. Sixteen routes continue to operate under the Greenock Motor Services Company Ltd. (4)

Ayr Corporation Tramways Committee on December 11th 1931 agreed to accept an offer by the SMT Co. Ltd. for the tramways. A payment of £20,000 down was made, and is to be followed by £2,500 per annum for ten years from January 1933, and then £500 per annum for eleven years. As a result the SMT applied on December 21st 1931 for emergency licences to operate buses in substitution for the trams as from January 1st 1932. The Southern Scotland Traffic Commissioners at a later date granted licences for services over the tram routes only.

The company acquired the rights in respect of public passenger transport within the burghs of Ayr and Prestwick, and on the Ayr and Burn's Monument route, and in addition the car sheds in Prestwick Road. The Council retained the cars, rails, overhead gear, and soon performed the necessary road re-instatement. The company had to provide a service of first-class buses (5) as good as that of the trams and at the same fares. Fares can be increased by agreement, however. In 1931 the Ayr tramways lost £3,450 and the total debt on the undertaking was £54,000.

Tramway operation in Bute

Through its interest in the Scottish General Transport Company, the SMT in November 1931 became the controlling interest in the Rothesay Tramways Company Ltd, proprietors of an electric light railway on Bute, of 3ft. 6ins. gauge, operated by 21 single deck bogie cars, and 4.81 miles long. This line was operated under powers of 1881 and 1901, the electric operation commencing in 1902. The only change made by SMT ownership was the repainting of the rolling stock in blue and white in 1932; but opportunity is taken to close the tramways in winter (October-May) under the Act of 1930, at a time when all the business can comfortably be handled by buses, which were first introduced in June 1925. The tramway gained authority to operate at 25 m.p.h. over 2½ route miles on private land in 1905, and special heavy section grooved rails were provided for the purpose.

The buses of McKirdy & McMillan, Ltd., a former BET associate, have just been acquired. (*"Just " here means just that...McKirdy & McMillan were acquired virtually at the date of writing*) (6)

Operation in Lanarkshire

The Central SMT Co. Ltd. is a renaming of the celebrated Glasgow General Omnibus & Motor Services Ltd, which was registered on June 23rd 1926, and was intended by its promoters to, shall we say, set the Clyde on fire. The methods of the LGOC were to be copied, including LGOC dividends, but there was no actual link between the two, other than that a former LGOC director was on the board. The GOC was only a partial success. It staked a claim, but had not the happy knack of getting traffic evidently possessed by some of its independent competitors. Bus services were instituted in August 1926; in 1930 the LMS bought 97% of the shares at 9/- a share. This interest was in due course transferred to the SMT, which renamed the company Central SMT Co., and included Stewart & McDonald Ltd. and J.W. Torrance Ltd. The control of the Lanarkshire Traction company, a statutory concern, is also held by Central SMT

The Lanarkshire Traction Company was formed as the Hamilton, Motherwell & Wishaw Light Railways Co. Ltd. in November 1898. In 1903 the name was changed to Lanarkshire Tramways Co., and when powers to substitute trams for buses were given in 1929, to the present title. The company obtained bus powers first in 1908 under a Provisional Order, and can work them within five miles of any tram route or former tram route, a provision which has been upheld in recent litigation and has broken down the monopoly otherwise held by Glasgow Corporation within its boundaries. The SMT Co. exchanged one share and 4/- for five LTCO company shares in 1932. The present control is held by the Central SMT, to which it was transferred in September 1934. The Company's head quarters is at Traction House, Motherwell. (7)

Fleet Constitution

The fleets of the SMT group companies are as follows:

Scottish Motor Traction Co. Ltd	502
W. Alexander & Sons Ltd.	960
Central SMT Co. Ltd.	329
Western SMT Co. Ltd.	662
Pitlochry Motor Co. Ltd	21
Lanarkshire Traction Co. Ltd.	119
total	2575

An order has been placed recently by the SMT Co. for 300 Leyland Cheetah single deckers, to be distributed thus:

Scottish Motor Traction Co. Ltd.	60
W. Alexander & Sons Ltd.	116
Western S.M.T. Co. Ltd.	100
Central SMT Co. Ltd	24
total	300

With 32 seat bodies, the entire weight of these

buses will be less than 7 tons. (8)

There should also be mentioned the 76 buses (Daimler 30-seat and Leyland Titan 51 seat) of the Greenock Motor Services Co. Ltd. to which reference has already been made. Simpson & Forresters Ltd., registered on October 1st 1929, operates 59 buses and coaches round Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and St. Andrews (9) while Mr. J. B. Stark's Bus Service accounts for three short routes around Dunbar. (10). The total SMT fleet thus approaches 2750 buses and coaches.

Diesel Experiments

The SMT Co. and associated companies provided a notable example of faith in the diesel engine and congratulations are due to these operators for their foresight, and to the impetus which their orders gave to compression-ignition development. Early in 1933 the SMT placed its first large order with Leyland for more than 200 6-cylinder, eight litre oil engines to substitute for petrol engines in existing chassis. This was followed by orders for over 50 oil-engined Leyland Tiger vehicles and a further 100 engines. (11) Shortly after the release of the Leyland four-cylinder unit, prior to the 1933 Commercial Motor Show, the SMT ordered 185 Lion buses equipped with this engine, bringing the total of Leyland oil-engined vehicles to 550.

Long-distance Services

The SMT and Western SMT two-day and 16 hour services from Glasgow and Edinburgh to London will be well known to members. It may be of interest to recall that shortly before the acquisition of Thomson's Tours Ltd. by the SMT, (April 1930) that company proposed to use double deck coaches on a 12 hour schedule from London to Edinburgh. Perhaps it is as well that the company changed hands before this could be carried out !

The Midland Bus Service inaugurated the WSMT Glasgow service: it was on this route on March 10th 1932 that AEC diesel-engined Regals made their highly successful debut on long-distance working. Many cross-border routes are now operated in conjunction with United Automobile Services. As from Sunday, March 8th 1931, the services of the SMT Ltd. and Midland Bus Services Ltd., from Edinburgh and Glasgow to London, terminate in the Lupus Street Coach Station of London Coastal Coaches Ltd.

Federated Interests

The Caledonian Omnibus Co. Ltd. was formed on April 9th 1927, to amalgamate H. Brook & Co. Ltd., Stranraer, Brooks Motor Co., Kirkcudbright, J.J. Scott, Dumfries, Annandale Motor Co. Ltd., Lockerbie and G.P. Bell, Carlisle. In 1932 Huntington Bros., Gretna, Farrer & Faulder, Carlisle, and South

of Scotland Motor Co. Ltd., Dumfries were purchased. The business of Andrew Harper, of Peebles (12), who worked into Edinburgh, was also acquired. More than half of the 28 bus fleet, which was established in 1923, were Thornycrofts.

The SMT opposed the application by the Caledonian Co. for stage service licences in the Edinburgh district. A joint service was commenced from Dumfries to Edinburgh by the Caledonian and SMT companies on January 1st 1932 - the service working twice each way on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Caledonian fleet consists of 110 buses and 14 lorries - control is in the hands of the Tilling and British Automobile Traction Ltd.

The Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of National Electric Construction Co. Ltd, also a BET associate, (1931-1936) operates a fleet of 22 buses under the trading name "Coast Line". Bus operations were commenced on February 28th 1928. The company was founded in 1905 to operate tramways, most of which on May 7th, 1931, were transferred to the Edinburgh Corporation. Federated interests north of the border thus do not loom large. (13)

Municipal Bus Operation

Municipal bus operation includes Edinburgh, initiated in 1914, Glasgow, started 8th December 1924 (all vehicles double deck), Aberdeen which commenced with buses in 1921, as did Dundee. Incidentally, in April 1932 Dundee sold to SMT for £5000, the Corporation's share of the rights for running the Dundee - Munifieth buses.

Railway Substitution by Buses

In Scotland the branch lines to Gullane and Lauder of the LNER were closed to traffic with the adoption of winter railway timetables on September 12th 1932. The former comprised Aberlady and Gullane Stations, and the latter Oxtoun and Lauder. The Gullane branch is replaced by an SMT service following the same route, whilst the two Lauder branch stations are served by buses, but less directly. Lauder itself is by SMT Galashiels - Melrose - Lauder route, and Oxtoun by the joint SMT and United Edinburgh - Oxtoun - Lauder - St. Boswell's service. The LMS branch from Carstairs to Dolphinton has been superseded by SMT buses serving Dolphinton, Duresyre, Newbigging, Carnwath, Carstairs and Lanark.

Not every bus substitution of a train service has been accomplished so easily, owing to the absence of appropriate operating companies. When the LNER Ellon - Cruden Bay - Boddam branch was closed on November 1st 1932, no bus connection by the associated Alexander company was available, since the Aberdeen - Peterhead via Cruden Bay route was not served by them. Similarly, when the Spean

Bridge - Fort Augustus line was closed on December 1st, 1933, the LNER entered into a tentative arrangement with A. MacIntyre & Sons of Fort William to operate a bus service over the route. David MacBrayne Ltd., in which the LMS has a 50% interest, opposed the grant of the MacIntyre licences, stating that they had supplied the needs of the road for many years, including the period when the line was temporarily closed in 1911. Failing MacIntyre, however, the LNER stated that it would prefer Macrae & Dick, the Inverness tour operators, and so the licence was eventually divided between these proprietors, two of the four daily journeys being allocated to each, and the Royal Mail carrier MacBrayne receiving nothing. The latter concern has now purchased the MacIntyre business, but so far has been unsuccessful in obtaining the licence. On December 3rd it was announced that a conference would be held soon in Inverness to elucidate the whole question of Inverness - Fort William services along Loch Ness-side.

MacBrayne Services

Although it has been engaged in bus operation over a long period, the firm of MacBrayne has advanced steadily since the Road Traffic Act, 1930. The LMS and Coast Lines Ltd. (*shipping company*) formed MacBraynes to operate shipping in 1928, with buses as feeders. In 1932 Link Lines Ltd, of Glasgow (*another shipping company*) was purchased, giving access to Arrochar, Ardrishaig, and Tarbert. A connection runs up from Ardrishaig to Oban. Power to operate over the Glencoe road in the following year, giving access from Glasgow to Fort William, and leaving only the Fort William - Fort Augustus section to be the subject of competition between Glasgow and Inverness. Albion and AEC "Q" type vehicles are used on the longer runs with many Bedfords on less important trips. Some 40 buses constitute the rolling stock, and they are operated from somewhat scattered garages.

A bus service which replaces trains on summer Sundays is that of the Highland Transport Co. Ltd. of Inverness, between that city and Wick, taking eight hours against the train's six for 161 miles. In winter the bus runs only to Invergordon, 31 miles.

North of Inverness

The Highland company was formed in April 1930, to take over Inverness & District Motor Services Ltd. The LMS has a 50% interest in the company, which operates 55 vehicles north of Inverness: they are mainly 32 seat saloons. The only doubledecker north of Aberdeen - an AEC Regent - is also blandly claimed, despite the operation of an Albion 48 seat double decker on town service in Inverness by Mr. William Greig on his 10 minute run to Kessock Ferry. This proprietor's "Greig's Bus

Service" are to be found on eight local routes, operating with smart Gilford and Albion vehicles. The longest occupies some 15 minutes, and the headways are close and regular throughout the day, making an admirable facility in a town of only 20,000 people. A smart folding timetable is provided.

The Kyle and Skye

From the Kyle of Lochalsh station roads run to Plockton, Stronferry across Loch Carron and to Dornie Ferry across Loch Long. The Glenshiel mail service is maintained by a Chevrolet 14 seat bus as far as Dornie Ferry. Passengers and mail are taken from Dornie Ferry to Glenshiel, alongside Loch Duich, by private car. From Kyle, Murchison operates a bus twice daily (mainly for schoolchildren) to Plockton, and provides various tours. One of these was to Inverness, but the high cost of travelling via Stronferry (over such a very bad road that most motorists have their cars conveyed on carriage trucks (14) to Strathcarron, where the railway and road meet.) or via Dornie Ferry, make it unremunerative. An excursion to Dornie (for Eilean Donnan Castle) was sampled. It was operated by a Morris-Commercial still bearing the livery the fleet name of the late G.B. Tours, and en route we called for the local policeman to take him to a cattle sale and, at the request of some drover passengers, stopped to view a calf at a wayside croft. This was all accepted as part of the day's work.

On Skye, services are provided by a number of concerns, principal of which is the Skye Transport Company of Mr. A. Nicholson, which was, until March 30th 1935, a branch of the Highland Transport Co. Ltd. and continues to use Highland tickets. A fleet of Ford vehicles, mainly 14 seat, is used. Services connect Kyleakin, Broadford, Portree and Dunvegan, and connect with the steamers at Portree (involving departures at 5.45 a.m. and other unusual times) to and from Portnalong, Staffin and Kilmalang/ McIntosh operates between Broadford and Elgol; and Beaton between Kyleakin and Ardvassar, Portree and Armadale, and Portree, Dunvegan and Glendale. the single fares are at about 3d. per mile, and speed on the narrow roads is high: thus twenty minutes are allowed for 8 miles, Kyleakin to Broadford, for which the fare is 2 s. single and 2 s. 6d. return.

NOTES

1. The first bus in Edinburgh was also mentioned at our last meeting (see page 2) Was the date 1897 or 1898?
2. The General Motor Carrying Company Ltd. was absorbed into the main Alexander fleet in May 1937.
3. The Caledonian Omnibus Co. Ltd. fleet was not taken into that of the WSMT until January 1950.
4. Greenock Motor Services were absorbed by the

Western S.M.T. in November 1949.

5. In accordance with the agreement, a fleet of new Leyland Titan TD2 double deckers was purchased. They were unusual in having opening (sliding) roofs. AG 8233-8263 (31 vehicles) were supplied to SMT, Edinburgh, but were operated at Ayr as Western SMT Nos. 245-275.

6. The Rothesay Tramways Co. was absorbed into Western SMT in November 1949.

7. The Lanarkshire Traction Co., was absorbed into Central SMT in November 1949.

8. The Leyland Cheetah was a lightweight chassis using mechanical units similar to the Leyland Lynx lorry. The only major passenger transport users were the SMT group and Ribble Motor Services.

9. Simpson & Forresters Ltd. was absorbed by Alexanders in 1938.

10. Stark's Bus Service, Dunbar was absorbed by SMT's successor on 1st January 1964.

11. Leyland Motors found a ready customer for its diesel engines in the SMT group. See article on the following pages. After the Second World War, the group indulged in another massive purchase of such engines, including some which had been built for use in military tanks, and had become war-surplus stock.

12. Harper, Peebles. See Book Review published in R&RTHA Newsletter No.22.

13. "Coast Line" was acquired from the BET by SMT on 1st January 1937.

14. What are/were "carriage trucks"?

POSTSCRIPT

With effect from 1st April 1948, SMT sold its bus interests to the British Transport Commission. The Edinburgh based SMT bus operation was re-named **Scottish Omnibuses Ltd (SOL)**, but until 1960 the vehicles continued to show a diamond shaped badge with the initials "SMT". From 1960-1962 the fleetname "Scottish Omnibuses" was displayed, from 1962-4 the name "Scottish" was displayed, but in 1964 this was changed to "Eastern Scottish"

Under the BTC, SOL, Western SMT, Central SMT and Alexander retained separate identities, but there was, from time to time, some adjustments made to territories covered. Caledonian, which had also come into the BTC, was passed to Western SMT on 1st January 1950, but its routes into Edinburgh were ceded to SOL.

In 1961 the BTC interests in Scotland were handed over to Scottish Omnibuses Group (Holdings) Ltd., later to become Scottish Bus Group Ltd. and subsequently Scottish Transport Group in 1968, at which point the bus and shipping interests of David MacBrayne were also incorporated. Later history is involved with the build-up (break-down ?) prior to deregulation, and its aftermath.

ARP

Scottish Triumvirate

During the thirties and forties the Scottish bus companies were driven by a triumvirate consisting of Walter Alexander, J.C.Sword formerly of Midland and later of Western SMT and Mr.Dick. These three men developed vehicle policy and negotiated prices: their huge buying power gaining some substantial discounts over the years.

The group mainly purchased its vehicles from Leyland Motors, and bodywork was largely supplied by Alexander's own bodyworks or Leyland. Despite a few problems at the time of the introduction of metal-framed bodywork, the two companies co-operated in the design of vehicles. Leyland Lion and Tiger bus chassis were built with the engine moved as far forward as possible, so as to allow 38 seat bodywork to be fitted on chassis which normally only allowed 34. (Northern General also did the same, using AEC Regal chassis.) In addition, diesel engines were taken as standard almost from the date of first introduction and later, after the Second World War, large numbers of (cheap) war-surplus engines were taken to upgrade second hand units and petrol driven coaches.

In 1939, Leyland was developing its "Panda" chassis, in conjunction with the Scottish operators. This was a chassis capable of taking 40-43 passengers on three axles. The SMT Group had tried three axle TS7T Tigers in 1935, but they were found to lack traction in adverse road conditions, so Leyland were prevailed upon to take them back and supply new two axle Tigers at a discounted price.

During the Second World War, Alexander produced its own utility bodies resembling the Leyland standard double deck body, and after the War, the very first Leyland metal-framed bodies on PD1 chassis were constructed by Alexander as a sub-contractor. Also, during the War, many single deck Tiger buses were dismantled and new chassis frames and springs of the Titan double deck type were supplied by Leyland so that the vehicles could re-appear with a much enhanced passenger capacity.

For many years, the W.Alexander company vied with the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co. (Midland Red) to be Britain's largest bus company. Both companies specified their vehicles to the last detail, but Midland Red, of course, actually assembled its own chassis as well as bodywork. One other feature which these giants had in common was a desire for efficiency and economy in all aspects of operations.

ARP

OBITUARY

John Dunabin 1916-2002

John Edward Dunabin was born in July 1916 when the Battle of the Somme was at its height. His family lived in Penketh, an industrial village to the west of Warrington lying just off what was later to become the A57, the Liverpool - Manchester - South Yorkshire trunk road. In order that his mother should resume her career as a teacher as soon as possible, John commenced his schooling at the tender age of four years, accompanying her to Oakwood School in Warrington. The journey was by train and tram, and covered the period when the Cemetery tram route was closed for complete reconstruction, and was served by buses hired from Liverpool.

John's secondary schooling began in Widnes and was finished in Herefordshire. What a contrast ! His love of chemistry was formed in a town noted as "the capital of the chemical industry," in a school which overlooked the central square where Tilling-Stevens petrol-electric buses could be seen. At sixteen, he and his family moved to a remote village served only by a twice-weekly bus service, and his education continued as a boarding pupil in Hereford. It was here that he was to acquire a life long love of English Literature. He took a degree in Chemistry in London, and then a job as an analytical chemist at the Woolwich Arsenal, just before the outbreak of the Second World War.

He spent the wartime years at various locations working in government service, and joined the Atomic Energy Authority in the early postwar years. He met and married his wife during the war and came to live in Warrington where the AEA had offices close to the former Royal Ordnance Factory at Risley. By this time his interest in buses, which began when he saw the start of independent bus services in Penketh, and was fostered by his fascination at the multitude of independent bus services in Herefordshire, moved him to join the Omnibus Society in 1946. His interest was in general in the men and women behind the smaller bus operators of the United Kingdom, and in particular in those of Herefordshire. When he had retired, he spent much time travelling there to prepare a book on the country buses in that county, interviewing proprietors past and present.

He wrote many articles and newsitems for the Omnibus Society and was a founder of the O.S. Provincial Historical Research Group, maintaining regular correspondence with members in many parts of the country. He wrote in particular on operations in the north-east and north-west of England, north Wales

and the Welsh borders.

His emphasis was always on the social importance of the bus, which served, in the days before near universal ownership of private cars, to both bind together and to broaden the horizons of rural communities. At his funeral service, an extract was read from his book "The Hereford Bus" in which he expounded his view of the village bus as integral to the social life of villagers who were brought together on their regular trips to town for shopping, education or entertainment. John rarely wrote about "main-stream" bus operators, but did produce a history of the first two decades of the Widnes Corporation Motor Bus undertaking. Unusually, the early story of this municipal bus operation was "personality led," and John had known the sons of some of the local men concerned when he was at school.

Unlike many of his generation, John was familiar from an early age with private motor transport. His father had a motor-cycle and sidecar, later, in Herefordshire, the family owned a Jowett car which may have been the first such vehicle in the village, and until he gave up driving John ran a Lea Francis saloon. This gave John and his family easy access to the countryside, and fostered a life-long interest in country walks. In Hereford John joined the Kilvert Society, dedicated to the memory of a nineteenth century diarist and country parson, whose work provides an insight into transport in the pre-motor car era, as well as Victorian rural manners.

Apart from transport, John kept up an active interest in the theatre, literature, and history. He liked to do The Times crossword, and avoided too much television. Despite his age, John made regular weekend excursions, and one of his last journeys was to attend the R&RTHA Symposium at Derby in October.

A funeral and memorial service was held for John at St. Thomas Church, Stockton Heath on 13th December 2002. It was attended by his family, many friends from Herefordshire and the various societies of which he was a member. His son Christopher paid tribute to a man whom he described as a good father and a good friend, Reg Westgate of the Omnibus Society read an extract from John's "The Hereford Bus", and poetry was read by a longstanding friend of seventy years and by a member of the Warrington Historical Society.

John Dunabin was involved in the Roads and Road Transport History Association right from the original exploratory meeting convened by Professor John Hibbs in November 1987. That conclave was of presumed potential supporters for the formation of a body fostering an interest in road transport history from wide perspectives. Some were lukewarm; some

enthusiastic. John Dunabin went along with the idea, and never disappointed us. Nonetheless, neither economists nor academics entirely seduced him, and they certainly did not overawe him. He expressed sometimes contentious, blunt views.

RA-ARP

We hope to publish a BIBLIOGRAPHY of John Dunabin's printed works in a future Newsletter.

News from the 21st Century

The true cost of motoring ?

A recent item in *The Independent* carried the headline 'Rogue parker runs up £28,000 in fines'.

It concerned a woman commuter in Glasgow, who had incurred the said amount in parking fines over a three year period, and continued to offend.

'Almost every day she insists in parking one of two cars registered in her name in a designated space in the city centre's George Square but refuses to pay for it. As a result, parking attendants who last year collected more than £4 million in fines across Glasgow, have continued to issue her with tickets, making the defiant parker the worst known offender in the city - and possibly Britain.

'Officials have calculated she is paying over £9,000 a year for parking only yards from a car park where an annual season ticket costs just £18,000.'

Beware reversing lorries

At a recent meeting of the R&RTHA, there was a discussion of the term "banksman", as used to describe a second man on a lorry, or a man employed at a warehouse or similar installation, whose job was to guide a lorry from the rear when reversing through gates etc., or when reversing onto a main street or highway.

Health and Safety Regulations nowadays seem to encompass everything, and your Hon. Editor was interested to note the sign shown below when visiting the recently constructed retail shopping facility at the Lowry Centre, Salford. Several such signs appear on the service road leading to the back of the shopping mall.

ALL VEHICLES
TO BE ACCOMPANIED
BY A BANKSMAN

Petrol to oil conversions in the 1930s

Between 1931-33, the main manufacturers of commercial vehicles in Britain introduced diesel or "oil" engines. Leyland and AEC redesigned their existing petrol driven engines. Crossley, which had a long history of building industrial engines, had its own design which preceded those of AEC and Leyland in the market place, but which fell from favour because of problems with maintenance. Gardner, of Patricroft, were also early in the market, and earned renown in the long run with the 5LW and 6LW range.

In the beginning the commercial vehicle user adopted the oil engine for economy of running costs. As will be seen below, there was a huge amount to be saved on fuel in the early days, and the greater cost of the diesel driven engine could soon be paid for by savings in fuel bills. There were disadvantages: the engines were heavier, noisier, and in the early days, smellier. Performance was perhaps less lively, but such as the Gardner 6LW made up for this by reliability and miserly fuel consumption.

Major vehicle operators, both in the passenger and goods sectors, tended to experiment at first. One or two new diesel engined vehicles would be taken into stock and their performance monitored. If the oil engine was felt to be the right thing for the future, then all new vehicles ordered would have such units, and petrol driven vehicles would see out their lives unchanged. A few operators would do their sums after the evaluation period and decide to convert some of their newest machines from petrol engines to oil. A vehicle with three or more years life ahead of it (in the thirties, buses were expected to have a useful life of 8-10 years) would be worth converting.

The term "conversion" refers, of course, to the vehicle and not the engine. The engines were in fact replaced. The major engine manufacturers provided facilities for this: vehicles would have the engine replaced and the old petrol engine would either be returned or taken in part exchange for rebuilding and supply to another customer needing a replacement for a worn out petrol unit.

The Leyland Motors Records show customers for replacement oil engines during the period 1933-1940. Overleaf is a list of the goods and passenger operators known to have re-engined vehicles so as to benefit from the economy brought by the oil engine. The list does not record "spare" engines purchased to keep in stock. The figures are arranged to show the

quantities of each individual order. Note how after the end of 1937 few operators continued to fit their vehicles with replacement engines, until of course the Second World War intervened.

Leyland Motors petrol to oil conversions 1933-7

(All are 8.6 litre 6 cylinder engines except those marked * = 5.4 litre 4 cylinder engines.)

1. Goods operators

C.Adamson, Edinburgh (1)
W.Aitken (1+1+1)
Cowan & Co., Glasgow (1+1+1+1)
Fairclough Bros (4)
J.Hirst & Co., Ripponden (1)
Hovis Ltd., London (1)
London & Southern Counties Tpt. (2+1+1+2)
Marsden, Thompson & Evershed (3+1)
Mitchell, Meikle (1)
Motor Carriers (Liverpool) (3)
J.Wilkinson, Edinburgh (dealer) (1+1)
Wrights Transport Services (1)

2. Passenger operators

Accrington Corporation (2+6)
W.Alexander & Sons, Falkirk
(8+4+25+28+2*+8*+6+6+8+25)
Birch Bros. (?)
Birmingham Corporation (note 1)
B.M.M.O. (1)
Burnley C.& N. (12)
Bury Corporation (14) (note 2)
Cardiff Corporation (1+15)
H.M.S.Catherwood (1+3*+3*)
C.S.M.T. (4*+40*+1+2+7+50+11)
Chatham & District (1)
County, Lepton (1)
Crosville (1+19) (note 3)
Cumberland (1+2+1)
Dundee Corporation (4)
Eastern Counties (1)
East Kent (4)
East Midland (1)
East Yorkshire (12+2)
Graham, Kirkintilloch (4)
Greens Motors, Haverfordwest (1+3)
Griffin Motor Co. (3+6+2)
Glasgow Corporation (10+15+5+148+30)
Gower Vanguard (1)
✓Hants & Dorset (1)
Hicks Bros. (1)
Lancashire United (2+10)
Lawson, Kirkintilloch (5+2)
Leeds Corporation (?)
Leicester Corporation (1)
Leigh Corporation (X)
L.P.T.B. (4) (note 4)
Newport Corporation (3+1+2+2+1+1+1+1+1+4+2)

Middlesboro (6+3)
N.I.R.T.B. (2+1+1)
North Western (1)
Pearsons, Liverpool (1+1)
Preston Corporation (12)
Rawtenstall (3+?)
Rhondda Transport Co. (1)
Simpson & Forrester (10) (note 5)
S.M.T. (25) (50) (6)
St.Helens Corporation (3+1)
Southport Corporation (1+5)
Swan, Swansea (1)
Thames Valley (1+12)
Tilling (Brighton) (2)
United Automobile (10)
United Counties (2)
West Mon. (2+6) (note 6)
West Riding (1+1*+10) (note 7)
W.S.M.T. (31*+57*+34)
Western Welsh (1*)
Widnes (3+3*)
Wigan Corporation (14+12+12)
✓Wilts & Dorset (4+1+5)
Yorks Traction (?)

Orders placed 1938-40

W.Alexander (12)
Leigh Corporation (2)
N.I.R.T.B. (50 for goods vehicles)
Preston Corporation (4)
Southdown (10)

NOTES

1. The Birmingham order involved AEC chassis and experimental installation of torque converters.
2. The Bury Corporation order was for chassis of various makes other than Leyland.
3. Compare the modest Crosville programme for 19 double deckers, after a trial with one vehicle, with the Alexander and S.M.T. group. (See Scottish article on page 9.) Many of the SMT engines went into vehicles of makes other than Leyland.
4. Newport Corporation decided to convert 20 buses after an initial trial with a diesel engine. The string of orders shows how the work was done piecemeal from revenue, over a period of five years.
5. Simpson & Forrester were part of the S.M.T. group
6. These figures belie the fact that West Mon did go over completely to diesel power, through conversions and new purchases in a short period, and could be said to be the first psv operator to achieve an all diesel fleet.
7. West Riding fitted the 4 cylinder engines into Tilling-Stevens chassis.

Wigan Corporation - a case study

The item on the previous page sheds light on "dieselisation" in the thirties. This article looks in detail how Wigan Corporation Transport carried out the process, and explains some of the "why" and "how" behind the facts.

In 1932, Wigan took a batch of 12 Leyland petrol-engined buses, plus one (No.83) fitted with the then new diesel version of the 8.6 litre power unit. This was a test engine supplied by Leyland (Birkenhead and Preston also took examples) and its progress was monitored by the manufacturers. There seems to have been no doubt on the part of the Corporation that the diesel engine was a success, and before the testing of the first engine was completed, an order was placed for 10 double and 4 single deckers for delivery in 1933, all to be fitted with oil engines.

The single deckers were for deployment on out of town routes with less frequent stops than urban services, so when the new single deck chassis were delivered, the diesel engines were removed and put into the four Titan TD1 double deckers delivered late in 1931 to replace Wigan's only trolleybus route. An order for 14 diesel engines to be fitted in replacement of petrol engines in the 1932 vehicles (of which No.83 was part) completed the initial phase of installing oil engines. There were now 29 double deck vehicles in the fleet, mostly the newest, representing over one third of the vehicles operated.

The work of installing the replacement engines was done by Leyland Motors at its Chorley Works, and not at Wigan. There is a note regarding the four new Tiger chassis of 1933 that the diesel engines were to be supplied loose, and it is almost certain that these would have been sent to Chorley, and the almost new petrol engines from the Titans installed in the new Tiger chassis there. These would then have been driven to Wigan to receive Massey or Santus bodies.

The General Manager stated early in 1934 that the fuel cost of petrol engined buses was 2.2d per mile, but diesel engined vehicles cost 0.45d. Later in the year, it was resolved to convert 11 more double deck buses. The estimated cost was £490 per unit, including fitting at Chorley Works. (The same price as paid in 1933) An additional diesel engine ordered as a spare was priced at £427. It was stated that the cost of each engine would be recovered within 16 months. All the expenditure was taken from revenue.

In February 1935, a third batch of conversions was authorised. This time 12 were ordered at a cost of £455 per bus. The reduction in price was effected by re-using the dynamos from the existing petrol units. The new engines were fitted to 8 double deckers and 3 single deckers.

All good things must come to and end, and in August 1935 the Exchequer raised the tax on diesel oil from 1d per gallon to 8d per gallon. This made the price advantage of diesel fuel less advantageous, but diesel driven vehicles were still cheaper by just over 1d per mile. Wigan gave the costs as 2.52d. per mile for petrol driven buses, and 1.24d per mile for those with oil engines.

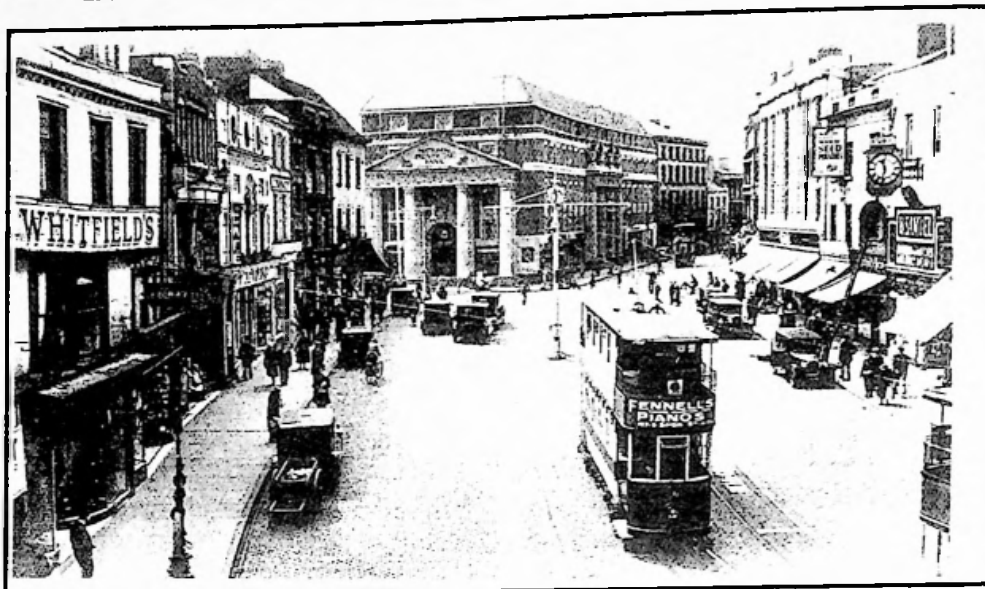
Meanwhile, revenue from the buses remained buoyant, and it was resolved to dispose of the last three buses of non-standard origin in the fleet: single deck petrol driven Thornycrofts. Three diesel driven Leylands were ordered as replacements, and after delivery the fleet was made up from 82 Leylands, 55 with diesel engines and 27 with petrol engines. In 1936 it was felt that additional buses were needed "to augment and maintain the high standard and efficiency of the fleet" so 10 more diesel powered double deckers were ordered, all to be paid for from revenue. Later in the year the order was increased to 12, and early in 1937 a further 8 were ordered.

It seemed that no further conversions were to be made, as the older petrol engined buses, now 27 out of a fleet of 102, were expected to last for no more than 2-3 years. There is proof, however, that the matter was at least considered, as Leyland report an enquiry made by Wigan for a costing for 24 more 8.6 litre diesel engines, early in 1938. This would have converted the remaining 24 petrol-engined Tigers and Titans, but not the 3 1927-8 Leyland Lions which were to be replaced. In March 1938 the Transport Committee sanctioned an order for 3 diesel engined single deckers (to replace the Lions) and 15 diesel engined double deckers to begin the replacement of the earliest remaining petrol-engined Titan TD1s.

In fact, by the end of 1938 it was realised that most of the double deckers were really needed for expansion of the fleet, and accordingly orders were given that of the 15 Titans to be withdrawn, 10 should be retained for a further 12 months and 5 should be stored, although one of these, No.65, was converted into a single deck breakdown tender. The operational fleet was therefore expanded to 112 vehicles, with the 5 additional vehicles not in passenger service making a grand total of 117. As Nos.13 and 113 were not allocated, the fleet numbers ranged from 1-119.

No more petrol to diesel conversions were made, but the lives of the 24 petrol engined Titans were to be extended considerably. When 14 more new double deckers were delivered in 1940, they took the numbers carried by the "reprieved" machines. Nos.2, 4-6, 60-4, 66-8, 70-1, but these were given a suffix A (2A etc.) and remained in stock, the ten from

HISTORY ON A POSTCARD



R&RTHA members who attend our Coventry meetings will no doubt recognise at least the Bank building in these pictures. The upper view taken in the early 1930s shows two Corporation trams (on the 3ft. 6in. gauge tracks). Note the public clock attached to the tramway pole.

The lower view shows the same place in the mid 1940s. Pre-war and wartime utility buses now provide the public service. A traffic island has been built, which retains a tramway pole and public clocks. The number of private cars is unchanged. The trams and many of the buildings were swept away in the famous Coventry air-raid of November 1940. This picture was taken in summer time, and an ice-cream vendor's van can be seen on the bomb-site to the left. Reconstruction has not yet started, the Burton's shop on the right remains a gutted shell.

THIS EDITION

This edition of R&RTHA Newsletter is a little late in appearing, but is dated December 2002 and completes the set for that year. The next one will be published as normal in February 2003, and will be available at the AGM and Business Meeting to be held at Coventry on Saturday, 8th February.

WIGAN -continued

the operational fleet going on hire at once to Leigh Corporation. All 24 survived the war, and were disposed of in 1946-7, some going on to see further use with owners such as Crosville and Barton. The Wigan bus fleet was thenceforth entirely composed of diesel driven Leylands until takeover by GMPTE in 1974.