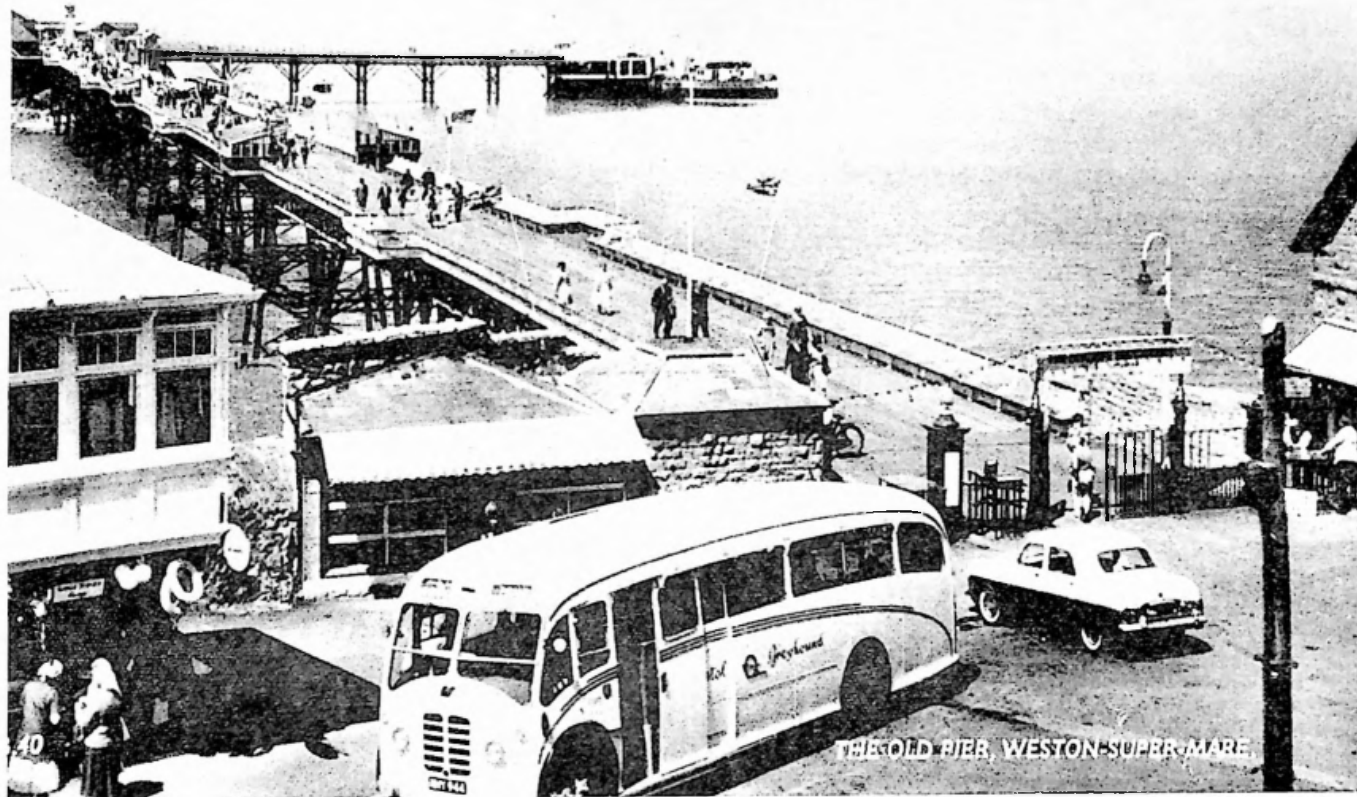


# ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

## HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

September 2003

Issue Number 34



### Day at the seaside by steamer or coach

**President:** Garry Turvey C.B.E.

**Chairman:** Prof. John Hibbs O.B.E.  
University of Central England  
Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU

**Secretary:** Gordon Knowles  
7 Squirrels Green  
Great Bookham  
Surrey KT23 3LE

**Treasurer:** Roger Atkinson O.B.E.  
45 Dec Banks  
Chester CH3 5UU

**Research Coordinator:** Ian Yearsley  
97 Putney Bridge Road  
London SW15 2PA

**Academic Adviser:** Prof J. Armstrong  
Thames Valley University  
London W5 5RF

**Newsletter Editor:** Ron Phillips  
16 Victoria Avenue, Grappenhall  
Warrington WA4 2PD

**E-Mail:** Ron@transnet.freemove.co.uk

### In This Issue

- 2 **Association Matters -Events 2003**
- 3 **Association Matters - Gaydon**
- 4 **Tickets to Work**  
*Restricted bus tickets at Leyland*
- 6 **Eastbourne - 100 Years of Buses**  
*Centenary of municipal bus operation*
- 9 **On the Cover**  
*Weston-super-Mare Burnbeck Pier*
- 10 **Cornwall - 100 Years of Buses**  
*Centenary of Railway Bus Operation*
- 11 **Rails to Roads ?**  
*John Hibbs discusses a rail to road transfer.*
- 12 **News of the 21st Century**  
*Is it safe to use public transport*

## **The Association Matters 2003**

### **Companion to British Road Transport History**

This was well and truly launched at an event held at the Science Museum, South Kensington in May. All members were invited to attend, and all who wanted a copy of the book should have had an opportunity to buy one at a discounted price. See also Roger Atkinson's announcement on the next page.

### **Colloquium at Chester, November 2003**

All members should have received by post notice of the **September Business Meeting** on Saturday 13th at the MBRT Coventry and details of the Colloquium plus an enrolment form. Below right can be found the details of the gathering, and requests for places can be sent to Roger Atkinson.

The venue at Chester, the Visitor Centre, is easy to find. It is situated to the east of the City Wall (i.e. left hand side if approaching from the city centre) almost opposite the Roman amphitheatre. It is within walking distance (approx. 15 mins) from the station or bus station, or (approx. 5 mins) from the Frodsham St. 'Park & Ride' terminus.

Those with time to spare should take a look at the municipal bus depot (opposite the Station) parts of which date from the horse tram and electric tram era, or visit the house, which is part of the museum complex of the Grosvenor Museum (Grosvenor St.) which belonged to the Crosland-Taylor family, who founded Crosville Motor Services. The Station, too, is worthy of a look. Once known as Chester General it was co-owned by a number of railway companies and was operated as a separate business. Built in 1840-48 it even had its own gas works for power and lighting. It was situated in an area heavily involved in the railway industry, so that passengers arriving by train were guided into the wide boulevard known as City Road, rather than the narrower and less attractive streets to the west which probably give a quicker route to the heart of the city.

### **Smithies List**

Long-standing members will be aware of the Smithies List of bus operators. Some time ago it was resolved by the R&RTHA that this be processed by computer and copies made available to members and others. It was announced earlier this year that this was finally to be done, but we received news of a similar document being handled by the Omnibus Society, and therefore the work has been held up until the Association has been made aware of what is being done, how it is to be done, and how the document held by us differs from that held by the O.S. We hope to discuss final arrangements at the September Business Meeting.

**R & RTHA**

# **COLLOQUIUM 2003**

at  
**The Visitor Centre, Chester  
on Saturday, 1st November**

**10.30 - 16.00**

## **"A Medley of Thoughts concerning road transport history"**

### **Speakers**

**Nigel Watson**

**John Parsons**

**Richard Storey**

**Dr John Hibbs**

**The speakers will address such topics as  
Crossley Motors, the writing of histories,  
road vehicle testing, "mistakes" on the  
buses and producing the Companion to  
Road Haulage history**

**Enrolment forms  
now available**

### A Good Day at Gaydon

The R&RTHA had a tent at the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club's 25th Anniversary **Classic Commercial Motor Show** at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire on Sunday 15 June 2003. How did this come about? Well, because the CV&RTC is a long-standing and supportive member of the R&RTHA, and Chris Salaman, its Chairman, invited us to bring a tent there to a suitable space provided rent-free. What were the logistics? Tent and R&RTHA banner provided by Pam Atkinson; display material and paraphernalia by our member David Harman. The tent was amply manned during the day by Professor John Armstrong, Richard Storey, David Harman and Roger Atkinson, with a look-in visit from Gordon Mustoe. What did we hope to achieve? Some publicity for the R&RTHA itself (and some new members), and some money by selling copies of the (then fairly newly-published) *Companion to British Road Haulage History*. \*

We will leave to the end a résumé of what we feel that we actually achieved. Firstly, we need to record that the weather was marvellous, there were abundant visitors to the event, excellent organisation and marshalling of the huge array of vehicles on display and of the stall holders and their tents, and a friendly atmosphere all round. It was a very good, very pleasant day, with sundry interesting conversations with those who stopped by at the stall. And, with two of the authors of the *Companion* almost continuously there, not many questions that caught us out.

The book attracted a great deal of interest. Some of the sales were to relatives with the foresight to think in June "Granddad will like this for Christmas", others to old haulage professionals or enthusiasts who spotted in the display copy a lorry or a reference which registered with them immediately. One or two, of course, who said "£35. I'll need to think about that" and trotted away. But we had sales that brought in a comfortable little profit for the Association.

There were leaflets on the stall from one or two of our corporate members, as well as an abundance of R&RTHA leaflets. Forecasting take-up can go formidably wrong. Only the London's Transport Museum leaflet could be said to have been briskly grabbed. PSV Circle, Transport Ticket Society and R&RTHA leaflets and (free) copies of R&RTHA Newsletter had to be pressed into the hands of bemused, if not reluctant, visitors to the stall; and at the end of the day, our leaflet / Newsletter stock seemed hardly to have gone down.

But, to summarise. An excellent day. Good sales of the *Companion* and, in retrospect we suspect that

one or two new members who have joined us since June first learned of us at Gaydon. (Took away our leaflets and mulled them over perhaps; anyway, we hope so). Many thanks to Chris Salaman, Steve Wimbush and the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club. And to John Armstrong, Richard Storey and David Harman.

RA

\* *Companion to British Road Haulage History* a Science Museum publication compiled by John Armstrong, Grahame Boyes, Gordon Mustoe and Richard Storey (all members of the Roads and Road Transport History Association) and John Aldridge. Originally launched at a gathering at the Science Museum on 8 May 2003, (Newsletter No 33, page 4a). ISBN 1 900747 46 4, 496 pages hardback. Price £39.95 + £2.95 postage (in UK) from:

Gazelle Book Services, Lancaster, Tel 01524 68765, Fax 01524 63232, e-mail: [Gazelle@talk21.com](mailto:Gazelle@talk21.com). NB The last two copies held by the R&RTHA itself will be offered for sale at our Coventry Meeting on 13 September at the discounted price of £35, that applied at Gaydon. If not sold there, they will be available at the Colloquium in Chester on 1 November 2003. Any further information regarding these two (pristine, but discounted) copies — e.g. whether they were sold at Coventry or remain for sale at Chester, please telephone Roger Atkinson on 01244 351066.



## Tickets to Work

We have often discussed the arrangements made between bus companies and wartime munition factories for the transportation of workers. Weekly tickets were sold on pay day at the factory for travel the following week, as it would have been difficult for a conductor to issue weekly tickets on a Monday morning journey to the factory, for example.

Wartime factory journeys were often made with "temporary" conductors in charge, whose duty was to guard the platform and give bell signals to the driver, but not to collect fares.

On this page we look at peacetime practice, during the 1960s and 1970s in regard to buses run by independent operators to the factory complex of Leyland Motors Ltd. Many such journeys had a flat RETURN daily fare, with no single tickets issued. The tickets were marked to indicate the date rather than the more usual stage boarded, and were punched by hand clippers. No Bell Punch type register was needed to keep track of passenger figures, as on a works service a count of tickets issued sufficed.

Below are illustrated tickets by Williamson, Ashton of Cliff Owen, t/a Progress Motors, Chorley, which were also known as Turner's Ideal Tours. The values span the period of decimalisation (February, 1971) and comprise 3/- issued March 5th, 2/6d overwritten 14p (not equivalent) issued January 9th, 17½p issued August 25th and 37½p issued December 1st.

The reverse of a Cliff Owen ticket is seen on the opposite page, which features tickets by another independent whose tickets are more specific, yet strangely lack the name of the operator! (Turner)

These tickets are specifically marked for "WIGAN to LEYLAND MOTORS," and "WIGAN to FARINGTON", which was another Leyland factory at a distance from the main central factory in Leyland. Although the tickets are designed to be punched to show the date of issue, to save time on the bus the tickets were stamped on the blank reverse with a rubber date stamp.

Clearly the need to reprint tickets to cover fare increases and then decimalisation prompted Turner to issue simpler card tickets, also date stamped on the reverse, but bearing no serial numbers. The text on these card tickets is minimal. What we do not know is what happened on the return journey... were the tickets collected, cancelled by tearing or punching, or merely inspected, or not asked for at all? On workers services on which the driver/conductor might also be an employee of the factory served, then all the passengers would be known by sight. It is known that many of the independent buses serving the Leyland works were left in the car park all through the working day, when their drivers and/or conductors worked on the shift.

Text by Ron Phillips, tickets supplied by Roger Atkinson

06002

1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	3/-	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8		26
9		25
10		24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		16
Mar.		15
Apr.		14
May		13
June		12

Must be retained for inspection  
Turners Ideal Tours Ltd.  
112 MARKET STREET, CHORLEY  
NO SINGLE FARES  
Valid day of issue only

Williamson, Printer, Ashton  
177

06868

1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	1/6	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8		26
9		25
10		24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		16
Mar.		15
Apr.		14
May		13
June		12

Must be retained for inspection  
Turners Ideal Tours Ltd.  
112 MARKET STREET, CHORLEY  
NO SINGLE FARES  
Valid day of issue only

Williamson, Printer, Ashton

11067

1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	17½p	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8		26
9		25
10		24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		16
Mar.		15
Apr.		14
May		13
June		12

Must be retained for inspection  
Turners Ideal Tours Ltd.  
112 MARKET STREET, CHORLEY  
NO SINGLE FARES  
Valid day of issue only

Williamson, Printer, Ashton

7707

1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	37½p	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8		26
9		25
10		24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		16
Mar.		15
Apr.		14
May		13
June		12

Must be retained for inspection  
Turners Ideal Tours Ltd.  
112 MARKET STREET, CHORLEY  
NO SINGLE FARES  
Valid day of issue only

Williamson, Printer, Ashton

# Tickets to Work

2306		
1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	3/6	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8	FOR DAY	26
9	OF ISSUE	25
10	ONLY	24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		Dec.
Mar.		Nov.
Apr.		Oct.
May		Sept.
June		Aug.
WILKINSON, PRINTER, ASHTON		

7544		
1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	3/6	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8	FOR DAY	26
9	OF ISSUE	25
10	ONLY	24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		Dec.
Mar.		Nov.
Apr.		Oct.
May		Sept.
June		Aug.
WILKINSON, PRINTER, ASHTON		

0554		
1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	3/9	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8	FOR DAY	26
9	OF ISSUE	25
10	ONLY	24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		Dec.
Mar.		Nov.
Apr.		Oct.
May		Sept.
June		Aug.
WILKINSON, PRINTER, ASHTON		

4981		
1	RETURN	IN
2		OUT
3	3/9	31
4		30
5	FARE	29
6		28
7		27
8	FOR DAY	26
9	OF ISSUE	25
10	ONLY	24
11		23
12		22
13		21
14		20
15		19
16		18
Jan.		17
Feb.		Dec.
Mar.		Nov.
Apr.		Oct.
May		Sept.
June		Aug.
WILKINSON, PRINTER, ASHTON		

WORKS SERVICE  
WIGAN TO LEYLAND  
AND FARRINGTON  
Return fare  
20 P  
For Day Of Issue Only

WORKS SERVICE  
WIGAN TO LEYLAND  
AND FARRINGTON  
Return fare  
20 P  
For Day Of Issue Only

TUESDAY 15 JUN 1971

## Tickets on this Page

### Above Top

2306 White 3/6d  
7544 Pink 3/6d  
0554 Blue 3/9d  
4981 Brown 3/9d

### Above centre

Pink Card for 20p  
Light Yellow card for 20p

### Left

Reverse of pink card ticket showing date stamp.  
Reverse of Cliff Owen ticket, (white) as seen on opposite page.

This ticket is issued subject to the regulations of the Company.

**CLIFF OWEN**

PROGRESS MOTORS (CHORLEY) LTD.  
& TURNER'S IDEAL TOURS LTD.

112 MARKET STREET, CHORLEY. Phone 3631/2  
EXPRESS AND WORKS SERVICES — TRAVEL AGENTS



## Eastbourne - 100 Years of Buses

Eastbourne Corporation was the first British municipality to make use of motor buses, with the operations commencing on 12th April 1903. Most municipalities started with electric trams and plans to construct a tramway in Eastbourne had previously come to nothing. However, it was the Eastbourne Borough Electrical Engineer, Mr. John Kempe Brydges, who reported on trials of a 16hp Milnes-Daimler bus at Crystal Palace in March 1903 which led to the purchase of the bus and the initial use of the machine on the Meads route.

Further Milnes-Daimlers were bought together with two Clarkson steam buses and some De Dions, both new and secondhand, but it was in 1912 that the Corporation bought its first two Leylands. Apart from 3 small Dennis buses in 1929, Eastbourne bought nothing but Leylands for the next 24 years. From 1936 orders were split between Leyland and AEC, with eight Crossleys also arriving in 1949 due to the post-War vehicle shortages. AECs predominated in the 1950s and early 1960s, but Leylands then prevailed once more, initially with PD2s until they were no longer available, followed by rear engined Leylands of various models.

Details of the undertaking under the management of Mr. Brydges was described in R&RTHA Newsletter No.14 (December 1997).

In the early days there were many innovations tried out by Eastbourne, e.g. covered top double deckers, conversions from normal control to forward control and much re-bodying of buses, and many of the primitive vehicles had very long lives. Although always a "small" undertaking, the workshops at Churchdale Road produced some interesting vehicles over the years.

The first Leyland supplied to Eastbourne was No. 31, HC 223, a Leyland ST. 30hp delivered in August 1912. It carried one of the first double deck bus bodies built by Leyland, being an "Eastbourne" type, O18/20Ro and was one of the first British double deckers not to have rocker panels, with all lower-deck seats arranged transversely and facing forward. This and No. 32, HC 245, remained in service until 1928. These and the six similar buses which followed in 1914 have been described previously as Leyland B types but this is incorrect. The batch of six, 33 to 38, were model S3.30.T and these also carried Leyland O18/20Ro bodies. The chassis were similar to the four buses acquired from Wellingborough in 1917, 36 to 39, which also were model ST.30 hp originally carrying second hand bodies.

No.35, HC 1157, was unusually converted to forward control and fitted with pneumatic tyres in 1928, and received a new dual entrance body built in the Corporation's workshops. It lasted in service until 1935.

Immediately after the First World War in 1919 Eastbourne took delivery of five new chassis for double deck bodies and six complete single deckers. 40 to 44 were almost certainly Leyland model F with 30hp engines, a special lightweight double decker chassis, being the post-War equivalent of the S3.30.T. Eastbourne's were early examples (if not the only ones). HC 1163, seen in the photograph, originally numbered 42, was renumbered 38 after being re-bodied in the Corporation's own workshops in 1927 with a modern looking covered-top and enclosed-staircase double deck body. The design suggests some Leyland influence, the new top deck structure has an uncanny resemblance to the soon to be introduced Leyland Titan body. However, when this was first launched the staircase was left open to the elements.

Ten new Leyland double deckers of 1920 became Nos. 21-30, HC 2097-79 (odd numbers only, and allocated backwards!). Almost certainly model C Special with the 30hp S3 engines, although the chassis numbers quoted for 29 and 30 appear to be in the 4-ton range, they carried Leyland 45 seat bodies (O23/20Ro plus two sitting by the driver). Leyland prepared drawings for these 12/19 to 3/20 and they are clearly what could be described as "Provincial style London buses", fitted with windscreens, a luxury not then permitted in the capital.

1924 saw the arrival of five more Leyland C Special double deckers, this time with bodies constructed by Vickers, Crayford, and with O23/20Ro (plus two by driver) bodies. They were basically to the Leyland pattern, although with 5 bays instead of the usual 4. The order was sub-contracted to Vickers due to pressures on the Leyland Bodybuilding Shop but their delivery was late (in August 1924) and Leyland Motors were not happy with the quality of the work carried out by Vickers. Despite this, the Kent firm was chosen on a number of occasions during the twenties to build bus bodies for Leyland.

Two batches of Leyland Lions arrived, made up of 10 LSC1s in 1926 (Nos. 40-49) followed by ten Long Lion PLSC3s (50-59) in 1928. These can be described as Eastbourne's first "modern" buses, and one was recently restored by a private vehicle enthusiast in time to appear at this year's Brighton Rally in honour of the centenary of municipal bus operation on the Sussex coast.



*Eastbourne built the body on this bus in the Churchdale Road Garage. It was built in 1927, when the Leyland Titan was about to be produced, and there seems to have been some design features taken from that model and incorporated in this unusual solid-tired double decker. (Southdown E. C.)*

Following the Lions came two batches of TD1 Titans with Leyland Hybrid bodies, of 1930-1. An unusual detail of these buses was the provision of a full-drop opening window in every main bay of the upper deck, a feature not repeated on the TD2s which arrived in 1932. The next delivery of double deckers introduced all-metal bodywork (the "vee-front" style) and torque converters. The combination of "gearless" transmission, the six-cylinder petrol engine and the flat terrain of most of the borough must have given very smooth riding.

It probably helped to preserve these bodies from too much stress. Although rebuilt as part of a campaign change by Leyland at Kingston on Thames, they survived in their original state until 1949-51. Four more arrived in 1935. A further eight Leyland bodied double deckers arrived in 1936-7, also with torque converters and petrol engines. By now, Eastbourne was also buying AEC Regents (also with petrol engines), and after the War the policy of purchasing both AECs and Leylands continued.

The war had a serious effect on the town's bus fleet. 17 Leyland double deckers spent some

time in the north west on hire to Lancashire United Transport. Others spent some time on hire to Southdown Motor Services, and three double deckers and a Lion LT8 went to serve the Royal Navy, only one of which returned afterwards. Three double deckers were damaged by enemy action and three more Lions were taken by the Ministry of Transport for war service. In 1939 the fleet consisted of 52 units, all petrol engined. By 1941-2 only 23 remained in the town, and three of these were out of service with war damage. Of the rest, 9 had been commandeered, 14 were on hire to Lancashire United and six were with Southdown. Of five Leyland Lion LT8s new in late summer 1939, only two entered service with ECT, and three remained in store and were then commandeered, never to return to their home town.

Post war buses came with diesel engines, but it was not until the early fifties that Eastbourne began a serious programme of changing to diesel power. By this time, the petrol-engined buses were nearing the end of their lives, so some old Southdown Leylands were obtained for their engines and gearboxes. ECT Nos. 1-3, 7-10 (AECs!) and 94-96 had Leyland 8 6

litre diesel engines fitted. In addition Leyland TD5c No 4 received an AEC 9.6 litre unit and similar No.5 a post-war Leyland 7.4 litre engine. AEC No.6 quite properly received a 7.7 litre engine from Southall. At the same time, those Leylands still with torque converters were changed to normal gearboxes. The insertion of an AEC 9.6 litre engine into a pre-war Leyland was indeed an innovation.

In 1949-50 six old Titans were converted to open top buses for seafront service. Included were two TD1s which had been rebodied by East Lanes during the war when the original bodies had been destroyed by enemy action. The open toppers were painted white, and given names (see list). Further batches of older double deckers were also converted as the need arose. Five new AEC double deckers delivered in 1961, Nos. 56-60 with East Lancashire bodies, also had this livery, as they had translucent upper deck roof panels and full-drop upper deck side windows, thus giving a partial open-top effect. In fact, as already stated, many of the pre-war double deckers had also had full drop glasses in all the central upper deck windows, a feature less obvious in the thirties than the nineteen sixties.

The livery of the main fleet continued to be an attractive combination of ultramarine blue and primrose, which colours had been introduced in 1912 with the first Leylands. This was combined with a white roof, in a style adopted at the time of the introduction of the first covered top Titans. In the fifties and sixties, the shade of primrose became paler, and was later replaced by "new white". When "modernisa-

tion" became the buzz word in the late 1970s early 1980s, various schemes were tried out, and the fleetname "Eastbourne Buses" replaced the older "Eastbourne Corporation" name, but the use of blue persisted, although the arrangement of the colours was varied.

#### OPEN TOP BUSES

Year	Type	Name	Withdrawn
<b>1949</b>			
77	TD2	White Princess	1954
78	TD2	White Queen	1954
80	TD2	White Lady	1953
<b>1950</b>			
64	TD1	White Knight	1956
75	TD1	White King	1956
79	TD2	White Rabbit	1954
<b>1952</b>			
94	TD4	White Heather	1961
95	TD4	White Ensign	1963
<b>1954</b>			
6	AEC	White Princess	1961
7	AEC	White Rabbit	1962
8	AEC	White Lady	1962
9	AEC	White Queen	1961
<b>1956</b>			
96	TD4	White King	1963
2	TD5	White Rose	1963
10	AEC	White Knight	1962
<b>1961</b>			
3	PD1s	13/14/16 (no names)	1968
<b>1963</b>			
2	PD1s	17/18 (no names)	1968

Text by R. Phillips, first published in the *Leyland Society Journal*, July 2003



*Eastbourne 68 is an AEC Regent V of 1958 seen in the blue and primrose livery with white roof. This bus is now in preservation.*  
(T.A.Brown)



## On The Cover

Birnbeck Pier, at Weston-Super-Mare, also known as the **Old Pier**, is seen on the cover in the late fifties. In the foreground is a Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. coach (a Bristol with Eastern Coach Works body of a type known as "Queen Mary") in the "Bristol Greyhound" coach livery of cream with maroon then used by BT&CC. This fleet name harked back to the Greyhound coach firm which pioneered express routes from London to Bristol.

The pier represents a **sea-road link**. It was once a port of call for the Bristol Channel steamers which operated daily trips from South Wales. The pier joined the mainland to a rock (Birnbeck Island) and was built 1864-66. From the island several jetties were built to allow steamers to berth at varying states of the tide. Of course, the pier had a pavilion and amusement arcades, but with its foundation set firmly on a small island, there was also room for various outdoor amusements such as a water chute and a "flying machine", and even a life-boat station. Town trams linked the Pier to the town centre until 1937.

At the time of the photograph the Pier was still functioning as a place of perambulation, landing stage for steamers, and venue for amusement, although all the Victorian and Edwardian "fun fair" attractions had long ceased to be. The owners sold the structure to the Campbells steamer company in 1962, but the appeal of the day excursions was in decline, and in 1971 the regular sailings ceased and the Pier was put up for sale again.

A new owner arranged for Victorian Evenings to be a regular feature at the pavilion. To add to the atmosphere of these events, a local currency was devised to allow guests to purchase food and drink at Victorian prices. Permission was sought from the Bank of England, who gave authority for the issue of seven different values of "banknote". Below is shown the One Farthing denomination, showing Isambard Kingdom Brunel with the S.S. Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge on the reverse. The face of each note showed Birnbeck Island, a serial no. and was signed by the Keeper of the Purse.



## Cornwall - 100 Years of Buses

In 1903, the Great Western Railway introduced a bus service from Helston to the Lizard, in lieu of constructing a branch line, and so began the story of railway-owned bus routes in Great Britain. This bus route could be said to be the first provincial service under railway control, and therefore the ancestor of the services operated by the large regional British bus companies under financial control by the railways or (later) the British Transport Commission. From the GWR, the Helston - Lizard route passed to the **Western National Omnibus Company** (WNOC), itself founded in 1929 to take over routes in the south-west within the operating area of the GWR. (Its sister Southern National, with shared head quarters in Exeter, operated in areas served by the Southern Railway)

**Western National** today is part of the First Bus empire. The fleet name survives as "First Western National", and one double decker at Penzance still carries the old green and cream colours, applied to celebrate the company's 70th anniversary in 1999. The rest of the fleet is in a version of First Bus livery, but most of the double deckers are rather dilapidated, they are among some of the oldest buses at present in service in this country, mostly Bristol VRTs dating from the late 1970s. Of course, Cornwall is not the best bus operating territory as far as today's big bus

groups are concerned. First Western National cut back its operations in Cornwall recently and local operators have stepped in to provide services, with the support of Cornwall C.C.

**Western Greyhound** has taken over many services along the coast of north Cornwall - this is a company formed in 1998 by ex First Western National MD Mark Howarth, his wife, and also ex First Eastern National MD Robin Orbel. Operations involve Wadebridge, Truro, Newquay and Bude, and the busy group of routes between St Austell and Bodmin. The mainstay of the fleet is Mercedes-Benz 0814 Plaxton bodied buses, but there are also a few ECW bodied Olympians

In and around Truro, and including the historic Helston - Lizard service, the local operator is **Truronian**, whose smart vehicles are turned out in a grey and red colour scheme. On the Weekend of 9-10th August 2003, there was the usual annual run by preserved vehicles on the Helston-Lizard road to mark the first GWR bus service. This year's event was of special significance, celebrating the centenary, and it was hoped that an original GWR Guy bus, recently restored, would be able to take part. The vehicles gather on the green at the Lizard, an unusual spot with its own microclimate and geology different from the rest of Cornwall.



*A First Western National Bristol VRT No.1309 at Newquay Bus Station, August 2003. It is rare these days to find a bus station unchanged over 50 years - the photographer remembers his first ride on a Bristol Lodekka at Newquay in 1954.*  
(Ron Phillips)

## Rails to Roads ? by John Hibbs

At about the time when the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was being built a company was floated with the title *London, Liverpool and Holyhead Steam Coach and Road Company*, with the objective of building a paved road alongside the Holyhead road, with a branch to Liverpool, on which the Company would operate steam driven vehicles for passengers and goods, *and charge tolls for others to use the road in the same way*. The civil engineer was Telford (whose Holyhead road had been opened in 1805) and the mechanical engineer was Trevithick, who had designed and built several steam driven vehicles. It is said that Telford was present at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester, and that he remarked that it would be a wasted investment, because of the amount of time when the rails have to be unused for safety reasons.

Stephenson by then was committed to rail, and we must pay tribute to his genius in seeing to it that the first lines, in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Kent and Surrey, were all built to the same gauge, in view of his vision of a national railway system. But he encouraged investment in railways, and once started the idea caught on as a symbol of progress in a modern world. Subsequent legislation effectively prohibited the development of mechanical traction by road, and the Turnpike Trusts, which were never commercial organisations, withdrew before the growth of railways. The canals responded by improving efficiency and cutting costs and lasted much longer than it is generally thought, but road traffic grew substantially and consistently throughout the Railway Age, for shorter distances and to fill gaps and provide collection and delivery of goods,

But it takes little imagination to see how Telford's scheme might have developed in place of railways, and how much more efficient it would have been in terms of use of land and of mechanical investment. Over the past 50 years the railways have lost their 'merchandise' trade, since the growth of distribution requires point-to-point carriage without break of bulk, and this business has moved entirely to the roads, using 'hubs' in the Midlands to guarantee overnight delivery throughout the country and abroad. (Most of this traffic moves at night, when the motorways are empty.) After 1925 the express coach services grew rapidly, after 1946 they formed a national network, successful in part because of the cross-subsidy in the railways which made long-distance train fares higher than necessary. Since the 1980s the railways have returned to competitive pricing, and the motorways have become congested, making the coach

services less competitive, so that they have been neglected by the principal operator, National Express. However, a certain airline owner has threatened to introduce "easycoach", and in the USA a business has started running very high quality coach services over town-to-town distances competitive with the airlines, offering reductions in 'lapsed-time' by avoiding check-in procedures and running city to city-centre.

### What Could Be Done ?

In 1983 I did some work with a colleague at the then Birmingham Polytechnic in which we surveyed the disused (former GWR) line between Birmingham and Wolverhampton with a view to its use as a limited access-road, for commercial goods and passenger vehicles only. We concluded that by the use of special kerbs to control movement this would be possible, and that access could be provided at key intersections with the road network along the route, thus enabling, for instance, buses from neighbouring towns to join the road for a faster run into their destination than was possible on the urban roads. Car access would be prohibited by entry points designed with parallel tracks suited only to the wheelbase of commercial vehicles, and with a 'trap' in between. No notice was taken of our report, and the line was subsequently converted to a 'light rapid transit' at great expense, and the trams run on it at a substantial loss. The idea of 'kerb guided transit' (KGB) has caught on, however, with busways of this kind being built in various parts of the country, with considerable success.

It is this that must be taken into account if there is to be rail to road conversion. One of the problems faced when the idea was previously floated in the 1960s was turn-round time in city terminal stations, but a KGB system could allow access at numerous junctions, making point to point movement possible as it is now on the motorways. "Stations" would become largely unnecessary.

There is one further point. For some time now an idea has been promoted for computer controlled use of vehicles on motorways. It would work like this. Before joining the motorway, the driver would punch in the number of the junction at which it was intended to leave. The 'computer' (for want of a better word) would take over the running of the vehicle, at an optimum speed related to the traffic, thus optimising the use of road space and greatly improving safety. I understand that the idea has been pursued by engineers, but I have no contacts in that field at present. What I would add is that with KGB the need for steering would also be removed.

## News from the 21st Century

### Safety on Public Transport

There has been much publicity recently (in September 2003) on the premise that many people are afraid to use public transport for fear of being robbed or assaulted by violent passengers. This fear is particularly related to metropolitan areas and late evening travel.

When so much legislation regarding the design of vehicles has been enacted and put into practice with the aim of "improving passenger safety" it is ironic that the issue of loutish behaviour has not been addressed. There have always been concerns about the dangers of riding on public vehicles. The stage-coach passenger had to face up to highway robbery or being frozen to death on an outside seat. Early railways were obliged to provide carriages or compartments solely for the use of ladies, and the larger stations had separate General and Ladies' Waiting Rooms. The class system (on trains, ships and tramcars in certain places) to an extent gave assurance to certain classes of traveller that one would be safe amongst people of similar status to oneself. And air travel, once it had become "safe" to use as the planes became less likely to crash, is now threatened by the fear of armed hi-jack.

The issue of safety, therefore, is not a problem of the hardware (the vehicles), but a social one. The transport operators for their own good need to try their best to solve the problem, but it is the politicians who must seek to root out the social causes of the perception that travelling by bus or train is bad for you. Human beings behave better in mixed company: putting groups of similar age, gender and inclination together (and mixing in alcohol and other disinhibiting substances) can lead to disruptive behaviour.

### Railway Reconstruction

We live not in the Railway Age, but in the Age of Railway Reconstruction. At the recent Bank Holiday Weekend (August 2003) many of the main line railways of Britain were closed for three days (in some cases even longer) for extensive renewal. There were predictions of grid-lock on the roads, with very fine weather forecast. In fact, the grid-lock did not happen, partly because of much advance publicity which discouraged people from travelling, partly because the weather was not as good as had been predicted, and partly because goods vehicles were not on the roads over the holiday period.

One newspaper (The Guardian) drew an

interesting parallel, recalling the mass closure of the Great Western Railway for three days in the 19th Century for re-gauging to standard gauge. That was indeed a massive engineering feat, accomplished without the heavy machinery used on today's railways.

There was one difference. The Victorian would-be passenger had no real alternative but to stay at home for the duration of the work, as the road network at the time was only adequate for short journeys. People who owned a private means of transport were few.

The disruptions to the rail network are indeed frustrating, but in terms of annoyance caused to the passengers are probably no worse than the level of frustration caused by long-term road works, such as the widening of the M25 a few years ago, and the long-term repair of the Thelwall Viaduct on the M6. The M6 (Toll) road has been another long term disruption on the approach to Birmingham, but will soon open to create, in effect, Britain's first "motorway by-pass"

### BCVM to move.

It has recently been announced that the British Commercial Vehicle Museum, at Leyland, is to move its collection of road vehicles and other artefacts to Preston, where it will share newly built facilities with the Ribble Railway on a site in the former dock area. There will also be some space devoted to canal history. The transfer will not take place for a few years.

The BCVM at present occupies part of the former Leyland Motors works, and the move is seen as a way of increasing visitor numbers, although it will be a pity to lose the connection with the former manufacturer of so many British road vehicles. The museum does not concentrate on Leyland machines, but has a variety of makes on display. The archive, however, based on the records kept by Leyland Motors, will not go to the new museum complex but will pass to the Lancashire Record Office, which is also at Preston. New facilities will have to be built here, too, and again the move is not expected to take place in the near future.

The archive, which contains well over half a million items (many photographic negatives dating back to circa 1900) has been described as "one of the foremost industrial archives in Great Britain".

### Newsletter 33

This was produced in 2 editions. Members who require the full 16 page version, should apply to the Hon. Editor for a copy.