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Launch of new book

The Association's new book, *75 Years of Traffic Commissioners – a lawyer's personal view*, was launched at a reception hosted by the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association and the Confederation of Passenger Transport, held in London on 10th May 2006. The reception was to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Traffic Commissioners. Among the guests were Dr Stephen Ladyman, Minister of State for Transport, the

Presidents of the host Associations, the present day Traffic Commissioners and senior civil servants from the Department for Transport, while the R&RTHA was represented by three directors. A presentation of a special leather-bound copy was made to each Traffic Commissioner, to the Minister and to author, Geoffrey Jones, here pictured being presented with his copy by Richard Turner, Chief Executive of the Freight Transport Association.

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Memories of West Suffolk 1970-74 ~ Part 2: School Transport

PETER BROWN

(Part 1 appeared in Newsletter 42)

As Technical Officer in the Treasurer's Department of West Suffolk County Council, one of my one-off jobs was to chair a small working party comprising Celia Derry (Assistant County Education Officer), Alec Barber (School Transport Officer), Roland Bee (Management Services Officer) and myself, which had been set up to investigate ways of reducing the cost of transporting children to school. I still have a copy of the main report we wrote; this is supplemented by what may be unreliable memories.

Background

The Education Act 1944 obliged education authorities to provide transport to school for all children aged eight or more if they lived more than three miles from their school; children aged under eight had to be conveyed if they lived more than two miles from their school.

According to the then latest available statistics, West Suffolk's transport cost per pupil was higher than in all but two English counties. The total budget for 1970/71 was £183,000, with about 6,700 children being conveyed each day.

An impending reorganisation of secondary education, the raising of the school-leaving age to 16, and an increasing number of teenage children meant that the cost would inevitably increase. It was estimated that the number of '41 seat coach loads' would increase from 86 in 1970/71 to 117 in 1972/73, reaching 144 in 1974/75.

A survey of 21 rural English counties showed:

- ❖ The percentage of children transported on stage carriage services (8%) was the lowest in the survey;
- ❖ West Suffolk's contract cost per child was amongst the highest – we could only speculate about the reasons, which potentially included little factory work being available to contractors, a lack of competition between contractors, and relatively large catchment areas; and
- ❖ West Suffolk had a more generous policy than half of the surveyed counties – for example, children under nine were transported from 1½ miles distant in rural areas.

A detailed study of the actual journeys made revealed that there was no legal obligation to convey about 60% of primary school children and 11% of secondary school children, all of whom lived closer to their school than the statutory limits. Many anomalies were identified, for example, it was found that one group of secondary school children were given free transport in 1940 because of the traffic dangers from a military base, long since closed. However, the politicians ruled that no group who were being transported would lose their service. (People who lose something protest much louder than people

Other ways of saving money that were deemed unacceptable to the politicians were changes which created long waits at the school, either at the beginning or the end of the day, and charging fares to the parents of children receiving concessionary travel (that is, filling seats which would otherwise be empty). The working party also ruled out altering school catchment areas and computerised route planning (then in vogue, but we thought as good a job could be done 'by hand').

School hours

The most important element of cost was the 'turn-out charge', the standing costs of the vehicle plus the minimum cost of employing a driver. Because so many buses and coaches were used for school transport contracts (from memory, it was about 70% of the number of vehicles in the county, most of the rest being on stage carriage services), there was no off-peak work available for the 'marginal' vehicle. Thus the best way to reduce the total cost was to reduce the number of vehicles required.

The most effective method we found for doing this was to set school hours in such a way that one vehicle could take a load of children to one school, then pick up another load for a different school. The working day at middle schools (for children from 9 to 13) was generally a quarter of an hour shorter than that of upper schools (13–18). We therefore decided that where practicable, the middle school should open, say, at 8.45am and the upper school at 9.15am. The gap would be a quarter of an hour longer in the afternoon. In this way, the operator could often do a separate journey to each school using just one vehicle. Some headteachers were opposed; I recall one saying to me, 'The children will have to work from 9am to 4pm when they leave school, so they should do that now.' However, in the early 1970s the Education Department could still dictate school hours; nowadays it would be a matter for the governors, advised by the headteacher.

We estimated that adopting our recommendations would, after the impending reorganisation of secondary education, reduce the number of vehicles required by over twenty. The biggest savings (seven vehicles) came from Ixworth and Beyton Middle Schools opening early and the new Thurston Upper School opening late. These served a wide rural area; something like 85% of children attending Thurston were to be conveyed at the county's expense.

Our recommendations were accepted and implemented with remarkably few difficulties. Because secondary education was being reorganised anyway, the opening hours were 'lost' in all the other changes. The politicians and officers were able to convince most headteachers that the money saved on the unproductive overhead of transport would be recycled into education.

Contractual arrangements

The Council's standing orders required all service contracts exceeding £2,500 in value to be awarded following a competitive tender. The school transport contracts were for three years (one third being tendered each year), with either side able to terminate the contract on giving three months notice. In practice, the operators used to request price increases each year; for example, in September 1970 contract rates were increased by 12½% because of a national wage award and new drivers' hours regulations. In many parts of the county there was no effective competition, with two or more tenders being submitted for only about half the contracts offered. In practice, it was exceptional for a contract to change to another firm on re-tendering.

Periodical competitive tendering was fair and open, but did it give the best value? The alternative was to give 'continuing' contracts, lasting so long as the contract was required, providing the quality of service given by the operator remained adequate, and providing any negotiated price rises were considered reasonable. This would give contractors greater certainty, enabling them to plan ahead. Renegotiation also made it easier to make minor variations to routes when the number and location of the children varied.

The disadvantages were that the process would involve extra work and would no longer be open – and in the public sector that was an important consideration. As a safeguard, it was recommended that a member of the Treasurer's Department accompanied the School Transport Officer during the negotiations with operators. Annual guidelines would be agreed but not published. (Remember this was a period of significant wage and cost inflation.)

Because the reorganisation of secondary education was causing a large upheaval to the transport network anyway, it was decided to re-tender all contracts on the new basis. The working party had been cautious about the financial impact of the proposal, estimating the annual saving to be in a range of £1,000 to £5,000 a year. In fact, the effect was much greater; I estimated that tender prices were some £8,000 to £10,000 lower in total than would otherwise have been expected.

I was personally involved in the first two cycles of the annual renegotiations. This was particularly enjoyable as it meant I could get out of the office and have an excuse to nose around the operators' depots, combining business with pleasure. Although being a young accountant bureaucrat from out of the county, so having nothing in common with the canny elderly Suffolk-born proprietors of the firms with whom I was generally dealing, we got on well – perhaps because I respected the rule that you never discussed business in the first half hour of the meeting. With Mr Mulley (Ixworth) you would ask about his Star lorry; with Mr Theobald (Long Melford) it would be whippets, for example. Their offices tended to be comfortably decrepit, though I remember a meeting with Mr Petch (Hopton) in an elderly coach, out of which he chased chickens before we sat down.

County Council buses

A detailed study of costings and an analysis of contract rates showed that the County Council could not operate vehicles more cheaply than the average contract, but they would be significantly cheaper than the most expensive contracts.

Knowing that the demand for school transport was going to increase, the working party was very conscious that extra contracts were likely to be expensive. Illustrating the problem, one operator wrote stating why he was declining to tender for a route: 'In the absence of any new workmen's service, we would have to allocate a vehicle solely for the new school run. Our standing charges would therefore be greater against this vehicle and force us to put forward a price which would look exorbitant on its face value.'

It was decided to buy eight vehicles, including one spare, and to try to base them in places where they could be used in more than one upper school catchment area. Later, a further four vehicles were bought. All routes would be tendered, and the decision as to which routes to use the County Council vehicles on would be made only when the tenders had been analysed. (In other words, we would not put in tenders ourselves, but would use our vehicles on routes where tenders were particularly high.)

Rather than buy conventional buses, the working party recommended purchasing non-PSV buses, similar to those used by the Ministry of Defence. These were fitted with three seats on one side of the gangway and two on the other, suitable for schoolchildren but not for private hire – but then we had no intention of using them for anything other than the journey to school and local trips to the swimming pool, for example. They would not be used for private hire. The buses eventually chosen had a Bedford SB chassis with a Marshall body, rather old-fashioned, simple and sturdy, but easy to maintain. I chose the colour scheme, bright orange with black detailing, because it was thought to be the most conspicuous and therefore the safest.

Someone with relevant experience was appointed to run the fleet. Part-time drivers were recruited, trained and required to pass the PSV test.

Although it was the most visible of the working party's recommendations and received the most publicity, my impression is that the existence of a small fleet of County Council buses had little impact, either in the short or long term.

► Peter Brown is Editor of the *Journal* of our corporate member, the Railway & Canal Historical Society, and he is now a member of the R&RTHA. We are grateful to him for letting us have this article for *Newsletter*. It has previously been published in the ongoing series of Occasional Papers published by the Railway & Canal Historical Society's Road Transport Group.

The Second Hand Bus Dealer

JOHN D. HOWIE

The role of the bus dealer has been referred to previously in *Newsletter* (including a brief history of *Ensign* - Issue 29).

I have undertaken some initial research into this topic and offer the following information in the hope that it will add to the cumulative knowledge and, possibly, stimulate debate to enable a more detailed study to be published in due course.

Early trading

Specialist dealing in used buses seems to have become a distinct business from the mid-1920s. Prior to that date vehicles were offered for sale by individual proprietors through the pages of the *Commercial Motor*. Typical are the following:

24 October 1912:- 'The Metropolitan Steam Omnibus Company at 111 Lots Road, Chelsea offer for sale a number of steam chassis, complete and in excellent running condition'

12 December 1912: 'Char-a-Bancs bodies of all types for sale 27-32 seaters. Apply Commercial Car Hire, Lots Road, Chelsea'

Of note is the tendency to treat chassis and bodies as separate units.

Commercial Motor introduced a separate classification for 'Used Passenger Vehicles' from about October 1920, but still the advertisers were former operators:

12 October 1920: *d/d bus, 24 seats, Aster engine, 1st class order mechanically, smart appearance, suitable for private parties or station work, any trial, photograph, bargain, £550. Midland Motor Bus Company, Northampton'*

28th October 1928: *For sale 2 Dennis 30cwt 16 seat saloon buses (Short Bros) - would make excellent lorries - £75 each. Wilts & Dorset M.S.Ltd, Salisbury*

26 December 1920: *3 AEC 33 seat s/d buses- new 1919. £750 each or £2000(the three), Crosville Motor Co Ltd, Chester*

Direct sales like this were few in number; normally used vehicles were taken by manufacturers in part exchange for new vehicles. Hence Leyland and AEC, in particular, acquired a selection of Daimler Y types, Leyland SGs and similar obsolete types which had little resale value as buses. Most eventually reappeared as lorries, although the actual process of how they were 'transformed' and by whom does not seem to have been recorded. It is likely that the recipient manufacturers immediately resold them to a third party who prepared them for resale and hence created the role of 'dealer'

An early candidate would seem to be Oswald Tillotson of Burnley who, advertising himself as a Leyland agent, offered a 'second-hand selection of various makes' alongside his genuine reconditioned RAF types. From the same date, Alldays Commercial Motors Ltd were offering a similar service from an address in Fulham.

The dealer becomes established

By the late 1920s there was an increasing tendency for used buses to be sold on for further passenger use, although lorry conversions were still more common and there was a growing market as 'showman's vehicles'. As a consequence, the period from 1927 to 1930 saw a rapid increase in dealerships in various parts of the country - some of whom remained significant over many years. Amongst the more prominent were Allsop, Sheffield; Lancashire Trading, (initially at Aintree but later over a wider area); Patmore, London; Wintour, London; Yeates, Nottingham; Greenhous, Shrewsbury; North, Hull (and later at Leeds & Sherburn) and Millburn, Glasgow. Further companies entered the market during the 1930s, some becoming very significant - in 1938 Dawson of Clapham was proclaiming itself as 'Britain's largest dealer in coaches, buses, and lorries' with addresses in Clapham, Croydon, Cricklewood and Euston.

Disposals from the large fleet of Ribble Motor Services give an indication of the evolving market:

Nearly all sales in the 1920s and early 1930s reappeared as goods vehicles; it was not until used Leyland PLSC models became available in the late 1930s that continued bus use became significant. This 'massive' clearout of 10 year old vehicles was almost certainly a major reason for Millburn establishing a branch in the Preston area. Small bus companies took the opportunity to re-equip with these larger robust machines; new operators included Bolton-by- Bowland Motor Services; Pennine; Rothwell of Holt and Baddeley Brothers of Holmfirth. Even so, the new owners of the bulk of the vehicles handled during this period are described as 'showmen'.

The Second World War severely affected the supply of second-hand vehicles; nevertheless, in 1943 a few dealers including Arlington and Millburn were still offering a very limited stock. The main trade was in spares and 'large number of 32 seat bus and coach bodies removed from chassis used for emergency purposes'

There was also a need to dispose of vehicles which were not fit for further service or unable to find new owners hence; the bus breaker developed in parallel to the dealer.

Bus Breakers

Although some dealers dismantled vehicles, the roles were normally undertaken by separate organisations. The process of bulk scrapping was a specialist activity which could generate economies of scale in the production of economic quantities of components and metals for resale.

Whilst breakers were to be found in various parts of Britain (e.g.: Way, Cardiff; Birds Stratford-on-Avon) the first concentration occurred in the Manchester area in the immediate post-war period probably as a result of the large number of time-expired buses being offered to local dealers.

By the late 1960s the major activity had transferred to

Barnsley in Yorkshire, as a consequence of the decline of coal mining which left a legacy of suitable redundant land and a workforce who had the necessary skills.

For a while some organisations performed the dual role of dealer and breaker. Bird of Stratford upon Avon made substantial purchases from London Transport and Birmingham Corporation (amongst others) both for resale or (in the case of trolleybuses), for dismantling in the large quarry adjacent to their premises. Daniel of Rainham in Essex acquired over 2000 ex London Transport vehicles in 1949/50, the majority of which were broken, and reusable parts returned for use in new vehicles. Don Everall of Wolverhampton went one better by creating his own rebuilds incorporating salvaged parts.

Case studies

Three individual company histories indicate the evolution and complexities of bus dealing organisations and their relationship to economic changes.

The trading name J W North was first adopted by J S Kaye in 1934 when he occupied a site in Whinmoor (6 miles east of Leeds), but for many years prior to this he had traded in his own name as a car and bus dismantler in Leeds. Four years later he joined a partnership (W North Ltd) at a new site at Stourton (also in the Leeds area) whilst continuing to trade in his own name from his original address.

In the late 1940s he acquired redundant PSVs (which had been stored or used for ancillary duties during the war) plus a large number of trucks and surplus military vehicles.

Post war stock was purchased from municipal and company bus operators, normally by competitive tender. The recipients reflected the social structure of the day with demand from independent bus companies, manufacturing companies for staff transport and the ubiquitous 'showmen'. A few were dismantled to provide a source of spares.

1953 saw their biggest purchase of over 2000 vehicles from London Transport comprising no less than thirteen different vehicle types of Bristol, Daimler, Leyland and AEC manufacture. To execute this North established an office at London Transport's Chiswick works so that in the end only about 600 vehicles were required to travel to Leeds. Many that did were dismantled and the chassis exported to meet the then almost insatiable market for mechanical spares.

In December 1962 the company moved to extensive premises on a disused airfield at Sherburn-in-Elmet, now trading as W Norths (PV) Ltd and throughout the late 1960s and 1970s proclaimed themselves as 'Britain's largest bus dealers'. They did not undertake any major mechanical work, their involvement being servicing, repair and recertifying, hence any that were uneconomic to repair were sold to breakers.

During the 1970s many traditional markets gradually

disappeared. The Bus Grant scheme introduced from 1969 reduced demand as small operators took advantage of the scheme to purchase new vehicles. Travelling showmen transferred their allegiance to trucks, and a combination of high shipping costs and easier credit led to a massive reduction in exports.

However, business was sustained by sales to Hong Kong and Macau; so great was the demand that it proved economic to repurchase Atlanteans which had recently been sold. Significant among which were the ex Ribble 'Gay Hostesses'

The 1980s saw a greater emphasis on dismantling, with a contract with London Transport to 'cannibalise' Routemasters and return the parts to London. (reminiscent of the 1950 agreement with Daniel!), and the reduction of Bristol REs to component parts. As usual all remains of the bodywork etc were sold on to a breaker.

Deregulation in 1986 generated an 'active market'. A large quantity of resalable vehicles became available as major companies 'downsized' and new companies appeared, requiring vehicles to take advantage of the opportunities presented. Contemporary with this new industry structure, was a growing trend to buy and sell vehicles by public auction, and North's adopted this method as well as traditional dealing. Again this was not entirely new – regular weekly auctions at Millburn's Preston premises had been a feature of the early 1960s.

Purchases in 1990/1 were so significant as to require temporary storage to be needed but by 1993 stocks had diminished and the company again began to concentrate on dismantling to yield spares; some vehicles even being imported from their associated Dutch company (Centraal of Utrecht) solely for this purpose.

By contrast Amalgamated Passenger Transport Ltd (APT) was a much newer and shorter-lived company set up for a specific purpose.

Originally set up in 1975 as a subsidiary of Lincolnshire Road Car Company under the auspices of the National Bus Company, APT became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Bus Company in 1981. It was responsible for 'processing' surplus vehicles from the organization's northern area, rather than their being sold directly to established dealers.

All redundant vehicles were collected at a site in Bracebridge Heath in Lincolnshire where they were evaluated. Some were resold, either within the NBC Group or converted for other uses, but the majority were dismantled on site. The spares generated were reused by NBC or sold. By the late 1970s this activity was unable to keep pace with the flow of incoming vehicles and the 'conventional breakers' had to assist - a contract with PVS of Carlton saw them undertake breaking and returning specific components.

As is often characteristic of a 'profit centre' which is encouraged to pursue 'commercial interests' within a large organisation, the company engaged in a variety of activities - engineering activities extended to major

overhauls and conversions for non PSV use, whilst the commercial side embraced a separate hire fleet and driver training. Acquisitions policy extended to vehicles from non-NBC sources as 'in house' companies could not provide a steady volume of work.

The balance between scrapping and sales changed over the years with former being predominant in the period to 1982; thereafter sales (particularly to the USA) were significant. But in 1984 the imminent break-up of the National Bus Company led to the decision to cease trading.

Millburn Motors was a major dealer in Scotland and North West England between the 1930s and the early 1970s. During this period trade seems to have alternated between 'peaks' and 'troughs' with the 'lean' periods sustained through stock reduction and sales of new coaches on an agency basis. Unlike other dealers the company did not engage in any dismantling of vehicles, un-saleable stock was always passed on to breakers.

It seems to have been a feature of bus dealing that parallel trade was often conducted by company directors in their own name as well as in temporary alliances with other individuals and organisations. Hence, although the earliest reference found so far is an advertisement in *Commercial Motor* in June 1936, the company is thought to have been started in 1932 by A Sanderson, with involvement (at various dates and in undetermined relationships) by Sanderson Brothers, Dixon & Wallace and, Simpson & Norris. Ultimately these last two took over the business for a few years prior to cessation of trading in the early 1970s

A brief review of the stock handled at the Preston premises gives an indication of the fluctuation of the business:

- 1938: Leyland: 50 plus Tiger TS2 (ex Ribble); 50 plus PLSCs (ex Ribble); Cheetahs; TS6 coaches; Titans
- 1940: Leyland TD1s (ex London Transport) most resold to Liverpool Corporation
- 1943: spares for AEC (Q & Regal); Daimler; Albion. Also Tigers and Lions (presumably for spares)
- 1948: Leylands (ex Sheffield, Chesterfield, Bolton & Middlesbrough)
- 1949 – 52: no significant purchases
- 1953: Leylands ex St Helens & Burnley
- 1954: 60 plus Leyland (diesel) Cheetahs (source not specified)
- 1955 – 58: very little activity
- 1959 – 61: various vehicles ex Wallasey, Maidstone & District, Western SMT, Wigan and Sheffield
- 1962 – 71: principally ex Ribble vehicles

After closure the site was sold for development as warehousing.

Current situation:

Over the past decade most of the major bus dealers have

volumes. Part of their history was outlined in *Newsletter 29*, since when their principal business has been disposing of London Buses including most 2005 Routemaster sales. Smaller organisations exist elsewhere in the country, such as Wacton in Herefordshire and Wealden in Kent but, in most instances the proprietor also engages in bus operation or general engineering. There are a few 'specialist' dealers (e.g.: London Bus Export of Lydney) who provide vehicles for film and exhibition work, often undertaking the conversion work 'in house' but the volume of vehicles involved is very low.



The general trend at present is for major operators to only dispose of vehicles when they become life-expired hence they tend to pass directly to breakers rather than for re-use within Britain. The fact that 80 plus vehicles could be donated to 'Tsunami Relief' during 2005 indicates that there is currently a limited potential home market for used buses. Safety legislation is also a factor in restricting their use for school transport without 'uneconomic' modifications.

Summary:

The bus dealer provided an essential role in the redistribution of second-hand buses but the limited volumes and erratic supply of stock meant that it afforded very few a continuous living. Thus companies involved themselves in other parallel activities to fill the times when their bids were unsuccessful.

More research is required to fully appreciate the role of the bus dealer but the proprietorial nature of businesses does not lend itself to written records and many individuals have retired. One of the more significant 'gaps' to be filled is the reason for the decline in the number of dealers in the past 10 years and the degree that this is due to the changing utilisation of buses within the major bus groups, the increase in property values and the age profile of the individuals within the business.

Sources & Acknowledgements:

- Bus Fayre* – various issues (especially for the history of North)
- PSV Circle Journal* – August/November 1999 – comprehensive listing by David Corke
- Buses* – April 1984

The Royal Umpire stage-coach – a survivor

KEN SWALLOW

In the course of researching with Bruce Maund the history of the Bretherton family's extensive stage-coach activities in Liverpool in the early years of the nineteenth century Bartholomew Bretherton's Umpire coach has kept making an appearance. The descendants of the Bretherton family treasure a picture of it painted by James Pollard, a coloured engraving of which has been published many times. But what was the Umpire coach? Was there more than one? What story could it tell?*

* * * * *

An early reference to a coach bearing the name *Umpire*, possibly the first, appeared in *Gore's [Liverpool] Directory 1818*. This described the *London Umpire* as "a new and elegant light post coach". It has seemed to Bruce Maund and me in our Bretherton research, that there may well have been more than one coach bearing the *Umpire* name – for the same reason that there are two trains bearing the name *The Flying Scotsman*! Whether or not there was more than one *Umpire*, one seems to have survived.

There are even two versions, both incidental to this particular account, of an accident to the *Umpire* on Finchley Common when its driver pulled on the wrong rein and lost control. One account (Gardiner L, *Stage Coach to John o' Groat's*, 1961) attributes the mishap to the *Liverpool Umpire*; another (Outram Tristram, *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways*, Macmillan 1888) says it involved the *Manchester Umpire*. Whatever the truth, both versions talk of the coach "lying on its side, the luggage scattered all over the road". Maybe this *Umpire* survived the accident? But what the *Umpire* could hardly have survived would have been the fate described for it in the 1932 memoirs of Prince Blucher, a descendant by marriage from the coaching Brethertons:

When the late Frederick Stapleton-Bretherton inherited the Rainhill estate in 1884 he pulled down the extensive stabling opposite the lodge gates where there was room for 240 horses. In the general tidying up the old coach was burned in the rubbish heap by Joe Ashton [Evelyn, Princess Blucher & Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (editors), *Memoirs of Prince Blucher*, London 1932]

Whatever the truth of these accounts, a coach bearing the *Royal Umpire* identity, having all the appearance of being an original rather than a replica, did survive to become the centrepiece of a museum of 60 carriages, relics from Croston Hall, antique furniture and effects, early farm implements and the like, set up in 1963 by farmer Martin Kevill at Croston, near Chorley in Lancashire. Kevill had apparently developed a love of horses at Wellington Barracks during the war. According to the *Chorley Guardian*, he had found his prize exhibit in an empty mill in Blackburn, and had bought it for £25:

When he swept the cobwebs and dust aside, he found to his amazement that the coach was none other than the Royal Liverpool Umpire. . . . The

carriage was only a remnant of its former glory, with one wheel hanging precariously from its axle and paint flaking to the floor at the slightest touch. But with painstaking care Mr Kevill returned the wooden carcass back to his home at Gradwell's Farm, Croston [*Chorley Guardian*, 18 August 1977].

It was Kevill's first purchase and he formed his Gradwell's Farm collection around it.

The *Liverpool Daily Post* (26 August 1963) had put Kevill's purchase price at £5 and added that he had "turned down an offer of £2,000 from America". The coach had, it said, been "owned by a Blackpool (*sic*) co-operative who brought it out once a year to advertise their Christmas grotto." I think I prefer the Blackburn version. But whether Blackburn or Blackpool, where had it been from the time of its retirement as an operational stage-coach and its use to promote Father Christmas?

The Royal Umpire Museum suffered from a lack of funding and failed to realise its potential, partly because Kevill tried to combine the task of owner and curator with the occupation of farmer. A local newspaper description in 1973 was somewhat critical:

The people who pay their 25p each to file round the museum want to have their interest satisfied. Instead it is stifled by a conspicuous lack of information. Only four of the 60 carriages are in good condition - these are the Royal Umpire coach and the Lords Derby and Lonsdale coaches [*Southport Visiter*, 7 June 1973].

To be fair though, Martin Kevill had saved many items from oblivion at a time when they were of negligible apparent interest or value, and had provided much enjoyment and education to generations of school children. But the task of maintaining a museum that was open daily from March to November, from 9 am to dusk, coupled with health problems, proved too much for him, and in 1977 he reluctantly decided to sell the collection.

The sale took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, 20/21 September 1977, by auction without reserve. Thimbleby & Shorland, the old-established Reading firm of auctioneers and valuers, noted for their expertise in dealing with horse-drawn carriages, handled the carriage related items and a local auctioneer the remainder. Lot no.290, on the first day, described the principal item:

The Royal Umpire road coach, on mail axles, said to be entitled to bear the word "Royal" in its name as it carried the mail on its Liverpool-London route. The side panels of the front and rear boots, and the two top quarter panels, are leather covered, and the coach has interesting features such as a removable luggage grid above the hind boot door and a box, probably for spare bars and equipment, in front of the rumble seat. A foot brake has been fitted in addition to the handbrake and part of the mechanism has been replaced by wire. . . . The

coach made its departure from the Saracen's Head, which was in Dale Street in Liverpool, and the towns of Lichfield and Atherstone were stopping places on its route to London, with Wood Street, Cheapside, Charing Cross and Old Holborn being other halts on the panels. . . . To be sold with pole, bars and spare lead and main bars, drag shoe and coach lamps by Barlow & Black of London with oil burners.

An accompanying picture of the coach showed the lettering "*Royal Liverpool Umpire, Saracen's Head, Liverpool-London, Litchfield[sic]*".

The *Royal Umpire* changed hands, according to the account in the *Liverpool Daily Post* (21 September 1977), for £8,500. It fetched top price in a sale that raised over £40,000 in total. Its purchaser was 33-year-old antique dealer Michael Kilgannon of Waverton, Cheshire, to form part of his antiques collection at Rossett Mill, near Wrexham.

John Mauger, who handled the dispersal auction for Thimbleby & Shorland, told me that three years later the coach was consigned, along with a Shelburne Landau by Peters & Sons, to his Reading Carriage Sale in September 1980, but no bids were received for it. Michael Kilgannon recounted in conversation how he then sold it on to John Barlow, of Northwich, Cheshire, who in the course of his wedding car business "did a few events with it". John Mauger saw it again in November 1981 when John Barlow offered it for auction, but the highest offer, from a collector, was unacceptable and the coach again went home.

At this point a Swiss collector, employed as a guard on Swiss Railways, but from 1980 onwards the purchaser of several notable carriages from Reading, enters the story. In May 1983 he expressed an interest in purchasing the *Royal Umpire* from John Barlow and asked the Reading auctioneers to put him in touch. John Mauger told me how, on payment of an introductory commission based on

the purchase price of £11,000 for the coach and a set of team harness, the old coach changed hands yet again. Its new Swiss owner added it to his existing carriage collection and used it for commercial work, including static displays at shopping mall promotions.

It seems there was some dispute over the financial transaction which was not to be resolved by arbitration. Barlow decided he must take matters into his own hands. So he towed a trailer over to Switzerland in the hope of loading up the coach and bringing it home. Some time afterwards, John Mauger received a call from him telling him how he had seized the coach from a hotel car park and set off with it. The trailer had become detached from the towing vehicle while at speed on a motorway (Michael Kilgannon's version of the story is that they were anxious to get across the border into France, away from the jurisdiction of the Swiss police), the trailer had rolled down a steep embankment and the coach was badly damaged. The rescue attempt had apparently been covered by insurance, both for the journey and the loading and unloading, and a claim was successful.

Shortly before Barlow's death in June 1986, the coach was bought from him by Dennis Molloy in Brailsford, Derbyshire, and he repaired much of the damage. There it remains, where I have seen it, tucked away in a corner of a barn at his livery stables – and "*Lichfield*" has a 't' in it!

The name of the *Umpire* lives on whenever nineteenth century stage-coaches are recalled. Where Martin Kevill's museum used to be, at Gradwell's Farm, there is now the *Royal Umpire Caravan Park*. The familiar James Pollard picture hangs on many a wall. But meanwhile a coach bearing the name *Royal Umpire* rests in a Derbyshire village, waiting for another restoration and for the next episode in its story to unfold.

- * The article on the Brethertons of Liverpool, by Bruce Maund and Ken Swallow, will appear in the transport history journal *Archive* later in the year.

Roger Benton contributes the following item from
The Sheffield Daily Independent
Monday July 2 1906

Weird Sight In Sheffield

DEAD MAN SITS AMONG THE PASSENGERS



A fatal occurrence on a Woodseats tramcar on Saturday night had a most unusual and gruesome sequence. A passenger named Robert Coverdale, of 302 Granville road, Sheffield, was travelling with his wife towards the Norton terminus on the top of the tram about 7-30pm, when he was observed to turn very pale. The change excited his wife's anxiety, and she made a remark as to his sudden pallor. He is said to have made light of it, explaining that he was a little out of sorts. A few moments later, without warning of any kind, the unfortunate fell forward and expired. Naturally,

there was a pathetic scene on the tramcar. Immediately the tram reached the Woodseats terminus, Dr Gale, who's residence is there, was called. He pronounced life extinct. At the time the Woodseats police were communicated with, and they decided that the best thing, under the unusual circumstances, would be for the dead body to be carried back towards Sheffield on the same tram, the Fire Brigade ambulance in the meantime being summoned to meet it en route. This was done, and the deceased, with his distracted wife by his side, remained on a seat on the tram, presenting a very unusual and unique spectacle.

The Fire Brigade ambulance met the tramcar near Wilson Hall, and the body was conveyed by it to the deceased's house in Granville road.

Deceased, who was about 40 years of age, was the Sheffield manager for Kelly's Directories Ltd. On the evening in question he had simply gone to Norton with his wife for the purpose of enjoying the pleasant tram ride along that route.

Association Matters

■ NEW MEMBERS

D.A. Dodd, Barnsley
P.C. Lacey, Wokingham
Peter Brown, Market Drayton

■ BUSINESS MEETING NOTES

Our March Business Meeting at the Coventry Transport Museum was attended by twenty-one members.

Garry Turvey opened the meeting by reporting on the development of the Association with progress on a number of fronts. In particular, he highlighted the paper written by Geoffrey Jones in connection with last year's Symposium on the subject of 75 Years of the Traffic Commissioners. Mr Jones had produced far more material than was possible to present at Chester, and sponsorship had been sought from the *Department for Transport* to convert the manuscript into a book for publication. The department was receptive to giving financial support. The FTA has offered its facilities in the production and printing of the book. A tight timescale was required in order to have the completed work ready for launch at a reception in London on 10th May, where the Association would be represented. Garry made an appeal for suitable photographs of Traffic Commissioners, past and present, to illustrate the book. The meeting was supportive of the venture and the opportunity for the Association to gain welcome publicity for our work.

Tony Newman gave his initial report on his work as Research Co-ordinator. His aims had been published in *Newsletter 44* and progress has been reported to two meetings of the Board. His presentation was an opportunity to talk to members about what can be done together. This Association was about making connections, sharing discoveries and storing a permanent record of the results. He considered it was an activity to be enjoyed by all and if communication is good, no one should ever feel under pressure to produce results. His first task had been to set up a current picture of the research work that members are doing and to find out where help is needed. Tony was disappointed that only 4 Corporate and 22 Individual members had completed the questionnaire and asked anybody attending the meeting who had not responded to complete the form. Sources of information are plentiful to the extent that bringing together disparate information that can be daunting. The internet is a valuable tool but the most successful research comes from examining the raw material to be found in libraries and archives, the primary sources of historical record. Other sources worth considering are museums, company archives, chartered institutes, local history publications and university dissertations but the richest source of original documents is housed at The National Archives at Kew. Two visits had been made by Ian Yearsley and Tony to Kew to establish links with the Association and Tony and Grahame Boyes had been there earlier this year to maintain the connection. He asked that members researching at County Record Offices could act as ambassadors for the Association and establish similar links.

Tony thought that indexes are the key to unlocking many of these sources of historical data. Holdings at Kew can be viewed on the Internet, while those at most County Record Offices are now searchable at a combined site on the internet, called A2A. Indexes to publications and bibliographies need to be noted for future reference and he appealed for members to advise him of any they find. A list of contents for our own newsletter is available in electronic format. Tony mentioned that he had made contact with over seventy local history societies with good results, making links between organisations and bringing to light studies that deserve wider readership. He appealed for assistance in keeping tabs on local history societies and analysing the results. In conclusion, Tony said that he had enjoyed his first six months as Research Co-ordinator but asked members to remember his job title is co-ordinator and their participation was vital if the Association is to make progress.

Various suggestions were made by members and Tony promised to consider these ideas for the future.

Garry Turvey opened a discussion on Archives and the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund. He noted that the Association had 110 members but that number could be a lot more. What could be done to strengthen the Association and what else could the membership do? He had written to the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund concerning the work of the Association with its limited financial resources, identifying four areas of potential funding:

- History of Traffic Commissioners;
- Assistance for the Passenger Companion project;
- A Research Award;
- Archives – particularly freight (scattered)

The Fund had responded positively and asked that the Association identify a project suitable for its funding. The meeting recognised that the costs of setting up an archive were well beyond the sort of four-figure sum that might be obtained from the Fund, although archives on freight transport need an archive. It was agreed that Tony Newman would set up a small group with Richard Storey and Grahame Boyes to look at potential projects that might be funded by the Fund.

After lunch, John Dickson-Simpson gave a talk on Lorry Makes of Yesteryear illustrated with slides. He made it clear that his only qualification was experience within the industry during the second half of the last century, since his apprenticeship began with Leyland Motors in 1948. He felt that the next two decades or so were the "glory days" of British manufacturers. He recalled Philip Edwards, "Motor Transport" editor, relating how, when he edited the "Leyland Journal", witnessing after the war the returning executives poring over a huge map of the world and arrogantly 'carving up' the world between them. The rate of technical progress after the war had been phenomenal with new engines – the 600 and 300 powering — and fresh designs of Beaver, and then Comet, trucks giving a progressive face to Leyland at the time

Diesels had entered an advanced era since Mercedes-Benz had introduced automotive diesel trucks in 1928. Adoption by the industry was remarkably rapid. By 1931, in Britain, the direct injection system was beginning to be preferred. Gardner had produced an engine with very high thermal efficiency and its products were not beaten on fuel consumption until the 1980s. Continuing on the engine theme, he recalled at the time of the Leyland/AEC merger that the latter had developed a 12-litre V8 engine, but it was launched without sufficient development and suffered from both cooling and gasket problems (subsequently cured). Leyland's next diesel venture was the fixed-head 700-series engine. Both it and the AEC V8 were not progressed. The fixed-head 500 of 8.2 litres was deemed the great hope, but eventually its in-service problems led to this being discontinued. So Leyland developed the 680 engine into the TL11 engine. John felt that progressive design was important and instanced the Leyland Comet that had been accepted with enthusiasm despite problems with its hypoid bevel axle that took time to cure. Its engine was continually developed, enlarged to 6.54 litres, and by the time of the Leyland takeover by DAF, had produced 320 horse-power at test-bed stage.

John went on to chronicle the development of cabs. He described the BMC FG cab with its angled doors and low-level windows introduced in the late 1950s as brilliantly suiting delivery work. Leyland cabs over the years were reviewed and after the Leyland/AEC merger, AEC adopted the Ergomatic cab at half the price of previous coachbuilt cabs. Elsewhere in the market, Atkinson produced the cabs cheapest to repair – glass reinforced plastics (grp) non-tilt designs. The form had to be abandoned because of the Swedish impact test which swung a weight above the waist, although this was not really valid as the majority of collisions were low-level accidents. Another first was the Foden grp tilt cab with rubber seals to eliminate draughts. Its broad arrangement was adopted for the Leyland Ergomatic. Later tilt cabs had a fixed floor and a tilting steering column.

The arrival of the Volvo F86 led to a revolution within the industry; its quietness and interior space were continued in the later F88 model. It had a big influence on lorry-buying habits with 250 bhp rather than 180 bhp – Leyland's answer being the Roadtrain T45. He also mentioned the Ford Continental with Cummins engine

and raised cab floor and the well-proportioned Ford Cargo.

John felt that British manufacturers had largely ignored continental Europe to concentrate on the Commonwealth; but along came Britain's joining the European Common Market, after which the traditional Commonwealth market declined, while funding for the EEC market was too short.

He also considered chassis, brake and suspension design on trucks. Ladder-shaped chassis frames were always the norm and little has changed in chassis design. With brakes, he felt the U.K. led the world and it was the first to recognise the value of front brakes in stopping trucks. Suspension tended to be ruled by lightness and cheapness – which meant semi-elliptical springs, despite the growth of air suspension, pioneered by Dunlop and Firestone. Rubber suspension, notably promoted by Norde in Britain, was popular with multi-wheeler users because of its reliability, but never attained more than a minority share.

The trend in configuration was considered and the increase in maximum weight of articulated trucks to 32 tons in 1964 caused a huge switch to artics. The need for three axle tractors, when the gross weight was raised to 38 tons, and the different configurations tried by the industry were reviewed, as was the adoption of tri-axle trailers. Problems with jack-knifing and the introductions of curtain-sided trailers and demountable bodies were also covered in John's very comprehensive talk.

Chris Salaman proposed a vote of thanks for such an interesting talk with its fascinating insight into the vehicle-manufacturing world and hoped that more freight topics would be covered at future meetings.

Chris Hogan drew attention to a *Department for Transport* consultation on the release of vehicle keeper data by the DVLA that he felt would be relevant to those corporate members maintaining records of individuals. There was general support from representative of corporate to the Association responding to the department on their behalf and it was agreed that the Board would circulate a draft response among relevant corporate members before submission to the DfT.

75 YEARS OF TRAFFIC COMMISSIONERS – a lawyer's personal view.

The book consists of 116 pages, including eight pages of illustrations and is perfect bound with an illustrated gloss cover. The cover price is £9.50, but it is available to R&RTHA members at £7.00 post-free. Members only should order it from G Knowles (at his new address) 17 Spring Grove, Fetcham, Leatherhead KT22 9NN, enclosing a cheque made out to R&RTHA Ltd for £7.00.

NEWSLETTER No.47

- The target date for issue of No. 47 is
7 September 2006
Contributions by
8 August please
- Provisional target date for No. 48 is
7 December 2006
Contributions by 7 November
- The 2006 subscription covers Nos.45 to 48

Letters

■ AMMUNITION DUMPS (*Newsletter 45*)

I don't know whether any of the various wartime / just post-war publications by semi-official bodies will give any leads on Ammunition Dumps. The publications included:

Transport Goes to War (HM Stationery Office)
It can now be revealed (British Railways Press Office)
British Railways in Peace and War (-ditto-)
Facts about British Railways in Wartime (ditto)

and the actual war histories:

The LMS at War (LMS Railway)
War on the Line (Southern Railway)
By Rail to Victory (LNER)

The last of which starts with the story of Driver Gimbert and Fireman Nightall both being awarded the George Cross, after detaching a wagon fire containing forty 500 lb bombs and detonators, at Soham, Cambridgeshire. The wagon exploded, damaging some 700 houses in the town, leaving a crater 60 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep. But for their bravery, the whole train, and possibly the whole town, would have been obliterated. Incidentally, the incident occurred at 01-45. At 09-00 the Americans arrived with heavy equipment, and at 20-50 that evening the line reopened.

John Edser

The article on bomb dumps is most interesting, particularly as we lived in Doune from 1977 to 2004, before moving five miles to Dunblane. I had never heard of the local dumps or the explosion. This fills in a bit of local history for me.

David Sawyer

■ "WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR, DEVA?"

Very many thanks for "What Did You Do in the War. Deva?" received safely today. What a splendid publication. I had not expected such a large book and I feel sure that it will provide hours of enjoyment. Doesn't it make a mockery of Lottery funding, that it cannot be sold?

Roy Larkin

Thank you and the Association and its members for this unanticipated, but much appreciated, treat.

John Aldridge

■ CHESTER BUS LIVERY

The photograph of Chester Corporation buses on the front page of *Newsletter 45* prompts me to write regarding the colour scheme on the buses shown in the photograph. In the 1930s, it had been light apple-green and cream, as had been used on the trams from 1902 to 1930. But a darker shade of mid-green for the lower panels was adopted about the beginning of the Second World War.

In 1942, Crosville Motor Services Ltd, the Chester-based bus company, whose buses were painted maroon, was obliged by its controlling company, Thomas Tilling Ltd, to change its fleet colour to green. This took some time to

implement fully, but in 1944 the Chester Transport Committee resolved to change to colour of its buses to distinguish them from those of Crosville; but it could not decide what colours to adopt. It was not until 1946, when a maroon and cream-liveried Foden demonstration bus was shown to the Committee, that it was decided to adopt those colours.

Meanwhile, as an interim measure in 1944, given that the colour of the buses could not be changed overnight – and no new livery had yet been chosen – the cream bands between the upper deck and lower deck windows were painted in a distinctive colour. Here, I want to correct a statement made in my booklet produced in 2002 to mark the centenary of Chester's municipal transport system.* I remember the green Corporation buses in Chester, and I remember the colour bands as bright red. However, a book published in the 'eighties, had referred to the colour bands as maroon, and I had deferred to this statement, although I still thought that the colour was much lighter and brighter. After my booklet had appeared, I was delighted to receive a letter from a gentleman who had been a teenager in Chester during the War and who confirmed that the colour was red. He also remembered numerous details of the 'utility' buses, one of which is seen on the right of the *Newsletter* photograph, complete with unglazed rear emergency 'window'.

Could it be said that the Chester livery of the immediate post-war was the most exotic of all the British municipal fleets, being (from the roof downwards) apple green, cream, apple green, bright red, mid-green, the whole embellished by advertising and gold shaded lettering?

Ron Phillips

* "Chester City Transport 1902-2002" by Ron Phillips (Chester City Transport Ltd, 2001)

■ "WORLD WIDE COVERAGE" (*Newsletter 45*, p.19)

Trolleybuses, normal-control heavy lorries, horse-drawn vehicles, street tramways and camper vans. This is a list of some of the conspicuous differences that presented themselves to me when *Newsletter 45* came to my letter box in Brussels, with its suggestion of 'world wide coverage'. In Britain, trolleybuses belong to history. Yet, in the past decade, I have travelled on trolleybuses in Arnhem, Budapest, Schaffhausen and Zurich and observed them in Valparaiso and Vancouver. Modern light rail transit systems are found in many countries, but that does not explain the survival of elderly street trams in Melbourne, Brussels and Prague.

Some differences are easier to explain. The presence of horse-drawn carts in Poland is a consequence of slow economic development in rural areas. A fortune awaits an entrepreneur who starts to export elderly but reliable 4 x 4's to Polish farmers.

Sometimes the difference between transport developments is cultural. There has to be a reason, other than simple economics, for it.

ans to Nord Kapp. Similarly, the use of bicycles in Flemish towns in Belgium looks to be conspicuously greater than it is in French-speaking localities. Cultural norms must have a role to play, as they seem to do, for instance in the fatality rate in different countries for road accidents. We might also consider historical data as a basis of comparison, as Reuben Smeed did in a paper to the Royal Statistical Society in 1948.

In many countries, the law has much to do with the prevailing design of lorries, which is one reason why normal-control (bonneted) goods vehicles are common in Scandinavia and the USA, but rare in Britain, even when the chassis is of Swedish design. We may note the gradual creep towards harmonisation of design in the European Union.

When we make comparisons between roads and road vehicles, we are struck both by conspicuous differences and by the fact that many differences are disappearing. For those that live in Japan, Australia, India or one of the other 71 countries that drive on the left, there is, and probably will continue to be, the obvious difference that road traffic runs on the opposite side of the road in other countries. Commercial vehicles of many types show distinct differences peculiar to their country. Witness (until recently) Maltese buses, Australian sheep trucks, Belgian coastal trams and the distinctive vans of the US Postal service. However, private cars show far less variety than once they did, thanks to globalisation. Paris in 1961 showed me Panhards and Talbots that I had never seen in Britain. Budapest, in the early 90's, was full of Dacias and Trabants. Now cars are similar, even though driving habits are distinctly different.

To look at the transport scene in a particular place is like contemplating a well-known painting. The contemplation of a Goya can inform our understanding of a Manet. Similarly, the use of roads in Switzerland could helpfully

inform our understanding of traffic in Cumbria. Why should Keswick be so different to Interlaken?

However, the R&RTHA is a history association, not one devoted to international comparisons. The past itself is another country, where London trolleybuses are swift and silent, Glasgow trams make money and Austin of England have a ready market for cars from Longbridge. There is good cause for comparing now with then, as opposed to measuring here against there.

David Stewart-David

The short item by Clive Akerman, under the heading "World-Wide Coverage", jogged my memory. I have a 1948 Park Royal Vehicles Public Service Vehicle "photo catalogue". A wide variety of buses are illustrated, often with exterior and interior views. However, as well as contemporary UK vehicles, examples of the following countries / cities are illustrated: Lagos, Colombo, Nizam's State Railway (India), Trinidad Electricity Board (single-deck trolleybus), Johannesburg, East London and Iraq State Railways (long-distance coach). There followed nine pages illustrating the constructional details of their all-metal bodies.

I also have an MCW Ltd. 1932-1957 commemorative booklet which, while mainly UK, shows single-deck buses for Cape Town (trolleybus), Montreal and Montevideo. It also shows a Leyland Worldmaster II chassis, fitted with a 40-seat 'Arcadian' fully air-conditioned body for the export market.

John Edser

Competition in Newsletter 45

Voting was thinner than your Editor had hoped it would be. Not entirely surprisingly, no corporate body sent in a vote, but the votes from individual members that did come in were very satisfactory in other ways – a wide variety of articles were chosen, reflecting the diverse perspectives of our membership; each of the four issues of Newsletter 42 – 45, contained two of the winning articles (and one contained three). A couple of votes were for "Book Reviews and Book Notices" (as a generalised category), but as Newsletter now has 14 different reviewers to call upon, no prize could be awarded to any one of them.

The two outright winners (equal) were: in N/lr No.

Peter Brown	Memories of West Suffolk	42
	1970-1974 Rural Bus Subsidies	43
	Centenaries	

Then:

Roy Larkin	Macadam	44
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Then (all equal)

Garry Turvey	Our History, Our Heritage	45
Ian Yearsley	Notes on the Trade Press	43
David Lowe	Education in Transport	42
Chris Hogan	Gladiator Mail Van	42
Dave Bubier	Discrimination – the 1963 colour bar dispute in Bristol	44
Ron Phillips	Britain's new 3' 6" gauge tramway	45

Editorial

Two Letters to the Editor in this issue, which readers may find interesting are under the heading "World-Wide Coverage". In *Newsletter* 45, Clive Akerman, tongue-in-cheek, warned your Editor not to aspire to World-Wide Coverage. In this issue, a letter from David Stewart-David reinforces this message, pointing out the distinction between comparing transport in one country with that in another, and comparing transport at one period of time with its broad equivalent at an earlier date – and saying that it is the latter with which the R&RTHA should be concerned. Yet, both John Edser in his letter and John Dickson-Simpson in his talk on "Lorry Makes of Yesteryear" (reported under Business Meeting Notes on p.9) invoke the wide – almost world-wide – impact of British commercial vehicle manufacture 50 years ago. The simple phrase, "World-Wide Coverage", can stimulate quite diverse reactions.

In this issue on pages 8 and 19, there are two newspaper reports, one from a century ago in Sheffield and the other from 83 years ago in an erstwhile mining area in Wales. If you also turn back to the traction engine fatality at Bell Hagg in *Newsletter* 43, these two or three reports show a number of priorities that seem to have changed, and that concerns that are now to the fore, did not carry such weight eighty or a hundred years ago – emergency services; the easy and convenient presence of the police in two of the cases, coupled with the seeming police emphasis on practicality; the short time span between death and inquest; the speed of decision by the inquest jury; that the driver shouting "Get out of the way, Jonathan" was sufficient to absolve him from blame; not a mention of insurance or compensation; fairly restrained newspaper headlines. And one recalls the practice – still within living memory – of collecting manure in the road.

Working conditions of lorry drivers – and their overnight accommodation – come to the fore in the Mac's café article. (But see also the paragraph on "Food for drivers" on p.18). Mac's café joins two other articles in this issue that touch on vehicle preservation – Royal Umpire and GPO2..

Personally, I simply find puzzling the picture accompanying the article "United Action in Road Transport", where a lorry is tipping a load of coke in the street outside a shop. That crude method of delivery falls outside my personal experience; perhaps readers will put me right. The other picture with that article, of lorries loading precarious bales of wool, however, fits perfectly with my memory of lorries in the West Riding.

More seriously, in the "United Action" article, one can detect – (too mild a word) – the impact of government control and bureaucracy. (We have already met this in the article "Government and Road Haulage" in *Newsletter* 41).

In this issue, we welcome a new contributor, John D Howie, with his article on Second-hand Bus Dealers. (New writers for *Newsletter* are welcome; do not feel

daunted). Also a new book reviewer, Kevin Hey, bringing the total of reviewers upon whom your Editor can call, to fifteen – a very welcome pool indeed. And our principal article on page 2, is the second and final instalment of Peter Brown's *Memories of West Suffolk*. Peter Brown was one of the joint top winners of the *Newsletter* competition for his first West Suffolk article, in *Newsletter* 42.

The front page of this *Newsletter* shows the official launch of the second book in which the Association has played a principal role: "75 Years of Traffic Commissioners – a Lawyer's Personal View" by Geoffrey Jones. Geoffrey Jones, a now-retired Bristol solicitor, gave a talk on this subject at the Association's 2005 Symposium in Chester last autumn. Funding for the book has come both from the Department for Transport and from our corporate member, the Freight Transport Association. Our Chairman, Garry Turvey, deserves great praise for negotiating both these sources of funding. Thanks are also due to our member David Lowe for his work on editing Geoffrey Jones' manuscript into book form. There is a separate note in this issue on how members may order the book at a reduced price of £7-00 (The cover price is £9-50).

The previous book in which the Association was concerned was the "Companion to British Road Haulage History", published by the Science Museum in 2003. There is a paragraph on page 23 on that book also, and how it can still be bought.

RA

RESEARCH — your attention is drawn to

Paul Jefford mentions an article on the history and design of filling stations that he has found on the internet. It is drawn from the magazine "British Archaeology", Issue No.38, October 1998. The internet reference is: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba38/ba38feat.html>

The Omnibus Society Provincial Historical Research Group Newsletter. Issues 116 (July/August 2005) and 118 (November/January 2005/6) have had some interesting items on early attempts by the Traffic Commissioners to apply their powers to fields to which their jurisdiction did not clearly extend. Our R&RTHA (as well as OS) member, Derek Giles, cited an interesting instance of an attempted requirement, in 1932, to impose closely defined forms of display for destinations, even seeking to control service numbers; it appears that the subject was quietly dropped at Ministerial/Departmental level. Dave Bubier, Editor of the OS PHRG Newsletter (and also an R&RTHA member) set out an instance, from the post-war period, of a particularly obtuse ruling on Excursions and Tours, by the Commissioners for the South Eastern Traffic Area.

MEMORIES ARISING FROM THE

Classic Café Nostalgia Gathering at Mac's Café, Padworth

KEN DURSTON

My recollection of Mac's Cafe dates back to around 1947 when I was demobbed from the Army and took several driving jobs before becoming settled in 1948 when a mate recommended me for a driving job with Herbert Brown of Burnham-on-Sea, a small time haulage contractor with six lorries - two long wheelbase Seddon 6/7 tonners, a Morris Commercial 5/6 ton Easiloat, and two 5/6 ton tippers - a long wheelbase Dodge Kew and a Fordson.

Traffic was plentiful in the 1950s but by then we had been nationalised and duly became part of the 4F Bath & Wells Group of British Road Services. Our stay with the 4F Group was rather short as Majors of Highbridge had subsequently been acquired along with Furslands Transport of Bridgwater and we were regrouped together in the 5F Taunton & North Devon Group.

New houses were being built all over the country, and with Bridgwater at that time being home to a number of brick and tile producers, this rapidly became an important source of work to London and the home counties in particular. We would load the bricks in early morning - handball, of course, our only aids were rubber pads cut from old inner tubes, but no roping or sheeting was necessary, and a sided lorry was an added bonus!

Once out on the road to London, we would go via Shepton Mallet, Frome, Devizes, across the Beckhampton flats, Marlborough, Hungerford and Newbury to reach Mac's where we would stop for the night. Next day up early and away up the road - generally to the developing 'new towns' such as Harlow or Welwyn Garden City. After tipping we would have to ring the BRS depot (ex Southern Roadways) at Goldhawk Road, Shepherd's Bush for a return load. This often turned out to be cement from West Thurrock or sugar from Tate & Lyle at Canning Town. These loads always had to be well sheeted and roped, but one was soon back on the road and down the A4 to Mac's. Beds would be booked at Mac's from our BRS office in Highbridge as there could be as many as six drivers staying the night; you booked your own bed before leaving next morning. Mac's at this time was open 24 hours so a driver could run in at any time. It was also very popular with the London trunk drivers, especially the Bristol BRS, and Unigate Milk tanker drivers.

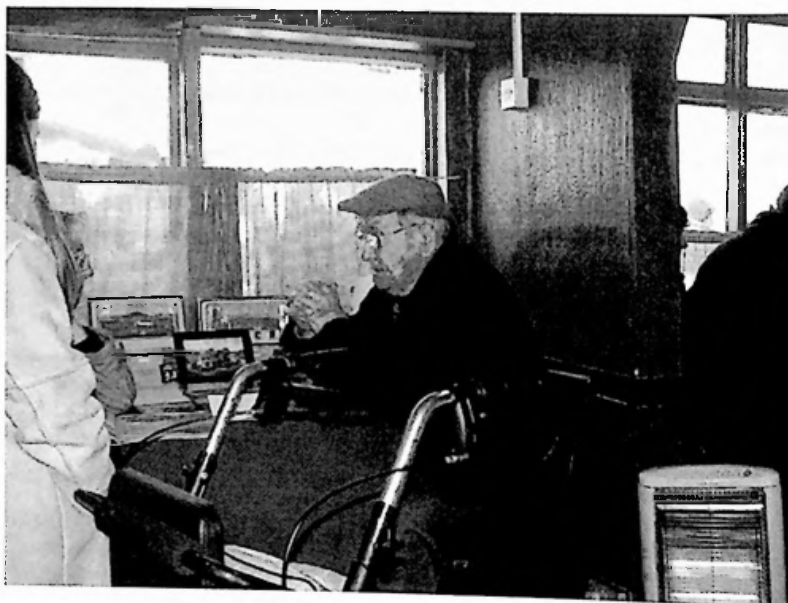
Dominoes was a regular game played at night after having a wash and brush up and an evening meal which was always very appetising, washed down with several mugs of sweet tea. Sometimes a game of dominoes would go on until the early hours before one got down to kip! The sleeping quarters at Mac's left a lot to be desired, but then 50 years ago anything went, and the Unions were not interested. I have had a rat run

over my bed in the old railway carriages, and in the winter we used to get the small combustion stove white hot to try and keep warm. The bed clothes were always damp (is that where my arthritis comes from?) and it is a miracle that those carriages never caught fire!

Post BRS days, Bowns of Bridgwater had a regular booking for two beds on Mondays to Fridays when they were running glucose from Tate & Lyle to Quantock Jam at Bridgwater. One driver would be on his way up, the other on his way home. What a boring life spending 5 nights a week sleeping in old railway carriages!

'Dot' was the cheerful counter girl and was always pleased to see you especially if one had been on a Manchester or South Wales run away from the A4. In the summer months after a meal and a wash and shave, we would use an empty lorry to ride up to the pub for a beer and a sing-song. One would have to remember where all the pot holes were, especially if it had been raining!

Another incident I remember from BRS days. We used to carry lead ingots out of Millwall for delivery to the Admiralty at Devonport. In the early 1950s there was a lot of lorry hi-jacking going on and this driver, being a little on the nervous side, drove out of Millwall on to the A4 and never stopped until pulling in to Mac's car park where he parked up for the night, safe, as he thought, amongst the other lorries. He went into the café for a meal and to pay for his bed and got into general chat with the lads. A couple of hours later he went out to get his washing kit but to his surprise his lorry was not there - it



Correspondent Ken Durston recalls the halcyon days of Mac's from one of his former favourite seats at Mac's on 19th March 2006. Note the portable fire which, no doubt, would have been welcome had they been available in those cold old railway carriages used for sleeping in the 1950s. (Photo from Steve Wimbush)

had been stolen for its load of lead! The lorry was found a few days later without its load at Denham woods!

Remembering these times, has brought back another memory. In the late 1950s a trunk driver for Western Transport, and who used Mac's regularly, would be seen with a monkey perched on his shoulder! This driver was Bob Crandon can any readers remember him?



An early arrival at Mac's was John Head with his latest restoration - a Bristol HG eight wheeler which has been restored to British Road Services livery. At one stage this was the regular lorry of regular contributor Bob Rust, another regular patron of Mac's.

Sunday 19th March 2006 was definitely a nostalgia day for me. The lorry park of Mac's was full of preserved lorries, cars and vans and a credit to the owners who had spent so much time rebuilding and restoring them. Some that stand out was the S-type Bedford tipper from John Mould, MW Services' AEC Mammoth Major (NUC 436), Dave Smith's blue DG Foden four wheel tipper (JOA 723), the Foden 8-wheeler LYM 753, and another Foden, the former Shipstones Brewery four wheeler LTO 766E which brought back memories of delivering Coates 'Up from Somerset' cider to their brewery in Nottingham during the 1960s, the last one, which the owner so kindly moved so I could get a better photo. The eight-wheel Atkinson tipper of George Wainwright from Shepton Mallet was one of the best restorations that I have seen for a long time and is a credit to all involved.

I also think a vote of thanks is due to the organisers - HCVS South Midland Area, for getting the current owner of Mac's (Raff Vigliotti) who provided meals all day. I had a home made steak & kidney pie, roast potatoes, peas and carrots which was excellent and very good value for money. If he turns out meals like that no wonder one has to queue and wait a while! Thanks to all concerned for a wonderful day.

Additional Notes from Steve Wimbush

Since taking over Mac's Café in 2003, Raff Vigliotti had sought to build up custom, which had been dwindling since opening of the parallel M4 back in 1971. Extension of the opening hours and the expanding of the menu away from the traditional lorry drivers' fare, along with overnight parking and accommodation, added to which much of the development of the former Colthrop paper mill into a regional distribution centre (rdc) for Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, and the nearby RDC for GIST / Marks & Spencer, both of which operate round the clock, have added to the build-up of trade.

On 19 March 2006, it was the oldies, once workaday visitors to Mac's, who took centre stage. Early arrivals included local preservationist, John Head, with his newly restored Bristol HG flat in the livery of British Road Services, and a chap from Folkestone who was having 'a trip out' in his restored Thames Trader artic car-transport. Smaller trucks and vans from the local area added to the variety on the forecourt, where Mark Gosden's AEC Monarch tanker in Pickford's livery was based. Included was our very own Derrick 'Bonny' Bonfield having a run out from Bedfordshire in his lovely little Fordson E83W.

Soon larger lorries began to arrive - the 'Thornycroft' contingent from Basingstoke, which included not only the usual four-wheelers, but the biggest Mighty Antar tank transporter, brought along by Mervyn Annetts, which was conveniently parked near another mighty heavy - one of Paul Hammond's Scammell heavy haulage tractors. A bevy of Fodens included Rob Young making the short run down from his Aldermaston yard, his health now permitting him to get back behind the wheel of a lorry after his serious car accident in 2004.

Dave Smith recalled attending many breakdowns at Mac's, as a fitter with commercial recovery operator R E Bates - we could not work out why 'local' breakdowns occurred so often at Mac's, and the good soaking one inevitably got in crawling underneath, due to the deep, water-filled potholes of the lorry park! Fortunately, on 19th March, they were not so deep, but nevertheless it was rather fitting that they were there - part of Mac's folklore.

By mid-day, there were some thirty commercials on Mac's lorry park, and it was time to sample the food - that is, when you could find a table. In recent times, wooden benches have been provided outside and these were eagerly taken as quickly as diners moved off. At its peak, Raff's wife, who taking orders, was forecasting forty minute delays, as her husband struggled to cope in the



Also seen at Mac's was this delightful 1955 Seddon four wheeler (PAD 843) which has had one owner since new - haulage contractor G H Martin from Corsham, Wiltshire. It was used on general haulage until 1964 when it was laid up in a hedge! In 1987 it was dragged into the company workshops and restored, since when it has been a regular participant in road runs and lorry shows.

By mid-afternoon, the longer distance entrants began to disperse, and as the last of the diners finished their meals, the conversations dwindled, and it was all over. Had the event been a success? To which a unanimous 'Yes' must be the answer. — all those responsible for the arrangements were overjoyed by their experience of their Nostalgia Day at Mac's — special thanks are due to all those owners and drivers of the preserved vehicles that brought the halcyon days of haulage and Mac's back to life.

It was while strolling round the lorry park that I spotted one of Mac's customers from yesteryear — Ken Durston, who had travelled up specially from Weston-super-Mare for the occasion, and after being introduced to a few folk there, was soon into 'overdrive', recalling what it was like to eat and stay overnight in Mac's in the dark days after WW2 and up to 1970. He submitted the contribution that appears above.

kitchen and their young female assistants delivered orders to the tables, returning with the empties. Almost without exception, the thirty or so tables inside and out buzzed with lorry talk, stimulated by some excellent period pictures of earlier times at Mac's — a couple of which showed the lorry park as full as it was on this occasion. There were a couple taken with deep snow on the ground and others while it was being dualled outside.—had it not been for the popularity of Mac's, with lorry drivers turning into and out, w might still have a two/three lane carriageway outside Mac's today.

► Steve Wimbush is Editor of CVRTC News, the periodical of our corporate member, the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club. Steve has also been the long-term representative of the CVRTC at R&RTHA meetings. We are grateful to him for letting us have this article for Newsletter. It was originally published in the April 2006 issue of CVRTC News.

The Theology of Transport

Most people travel from place to place because they want to be somewhere else. In business and industry goods and raw materials are carried somewhere else where their value will be greater. All this costs money, so we may conclude that what would be preferred would be *instantaneous transposition*. Now in eternity there is no time, and it may be assumed that such was the case before the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Does this not lead to the disturbing conclusion that the demand for transport originated in the Fall of Man?

John Hibbs

Member's Query

Half-cab lorries. In Putney in the 1950s, I used to see Ham River AEC tippers carrying sand and gravel. These vehicles, like many "off-road" lorries, had half-cabs. Did any other operators commonly use half-cab lorries for road use?

Answer: (Members' queries are welcome; but not all may be as swiftly responded to as this one. Readers with further information on this query are welcome to send it in). The brief Editorial answer is given in the item elsewhere in this Newsletter in a paragraph headed "Companion to British Road Haulage History". The "Companion" has an informative entry for half-cabs, and even a picture of a Ham River AEC Mercury.

Ed.RA

United Action in Road Transport

THE LATE J H TURNER O.B.E., *Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee of Road Hauliers' Organisations*

This article is reproduced from the publication "Road Transport — A Victory Review of Peacetime Problems", published in 1945 by Staples Press Ltd, London W1, price 2/6. This same publication has previously been drawn upon in Newsletter 38, p.5 and extensively in Newsletter 41, p.16, where an article on "Government and Road Haulage" was reproduced.

In the article which follows here, two consecutive paragraphs elaborating in detail on the work of the Standing Joint Committee have been omitted, where indicated by "—————"

Fifty years ago all road transport was undertaken by horse-drawn vehicles; membership of road transport organisations was accordingly confined to owners of horse-drawn vehicles, and in view of their limited sphere of operation it is not surprising to find that these organisations were essentially local in character. Development in the last fifty years has passed through three main phases, i.e.:

- (i) gradual change (not yet complete) from the horse to the internal combustion engine;
- (ii) The supersession of the local conception of road transport organisation by a national conception, this resulting from the ubiquity of the motor vehicle;
- (iii) The growth of the distinction between the operator who carries for 'hire or reward' and the operator who carries goods in connection with his own business; this culminated in the Road and Rail Traffic Act, 1933, under which the former is required to hold an A licence and the latter a C licence; mixed operations are authorised under a B licence.

These three phases are not clearly delineated but overlap, this being the explanation of the unhomogeneous state of the organisation of the road transport industry. At the end of 1938 (when the Standing Joint Committee was formed) there were seven national organisations providing for road transport operators:

- (i) The National Road Transport Employers' Federation, an organisation linking together the remaining local horse associations - these now providing for motor as well as horse owners; membership (with small exceptions) is confined to those who carried goods for hire or reward;
- (ii) The Commercial Motor Users Association (incorporated in 1905 but originated two years earlier) which admitted to membership goods and passenger vehicle operators, i.e. A and B, C and PS.V. licencees.
- (iii) Associated Road Operators, which also provides for A, B, C and PS.V operators; this Association (and its predecessors) largely recruited its membership from the very large number of operators who entered the industry in the inter-war period;
- (iv) Scottish Commercial Motor Users Association - the counterpart (in Scotland) of the Commercial Motor Users Association in England;

- (v) The National Conference of Express Carriers; and
- (vi) The National Association of Furniture Warehousemen and Removers - each providing for the specialised interests indicated by their titles.

Haulage as a Livelihood

The carrier of goods for hire or reward (the A or B licence holder) depends upon haulage for his livelihood, and, consequently, the coherent expression of the views of such carriers is an obvious necessity. In 1938, the time was not ripe to attempt to achieve perfection by joining the seven existing organisations into one body, yet it was urgently necessary for the public road carrying industry to speak with one voice. A temporary expedient to bridge the gap was accordingly devised. The seven organisations were each invited to nominate a certain number of A and B licence holders to constitute a committee to speak collectively for the public road carriers who were members of these organisations. This committee was given the title 'Standing Joint Committee of the Road Hauliers' National Organisations', the terms of reference being 'to consider all matters of common interest to the public road carrying industry, to co-ordinate the views of the several road transport organisations in all matter of common interest, to facilitate common action in the best interests of the haulage industry, and to provide a medium through which the views of professional road carriers could be adequately expressed with greater emphasis.'

For the first time in the history of road transport the government and others were enabled to consult one body with the assurance that the views expressed would be those of the professional road carrying industry, thus remedying a defect from which the industry had long suffered.

It was always appreciated that the Standing Joint Committee did not constitute the final solution for the proper organisation of the industry, but it bridged the gap until the industry's affairs could be settled on a sound basis. The measure of unity achieved in the professional goods carrying industry has been invaluable in the exacting conditions of war.

Many sub-committees

The war indeed accentuated the need for the Committee. The original intention was to protect the interests of public road carriers and to link up the work of their associations. As time went on, however, the work of the Committee expanded in both volume and conception. In 1942 the Committee was re-organised on a sub-committee basis, the following sub-committees (inter alia) being created to deal with the subjects indicated by their titles: Rates Committee, Licences and Rationing Systems Committee, Vehicle Supply and Maintenance Committee, Parliamentary and Propaganda Committee, Liability and Insurance Committee, Alternative Fuels Committee, Labour Committee, Highways Committee and Technical Committee. Moreover it was found that there was a growing tendency to create new committees to deal with special needs as and when they arose. These committees were apt to work

independently, and it was gradually realised that if the industry was to have a sound and consistent policy which could be given effective force and direction, it was



This Thornycroft tipper serves Glasgow consumers with their coke.

imperative that the work of these committees should be properly co-ordinated. This became one of the more important functions of the Standing Joint Committee which effectively linked up the work of the Road-Rail Central Conference, Road Haulage Consultative Committee, Road Haulage (Rates) Advisory Committee and Road Haulage Central Wages Board, to mention some of the principal bodies.

The closest contact was always maintained with government departments, particularly the Ministry of War Transport and the Ministry of Labour and National Service. In 1940, as a result of representations made by the Standing Joint Committee, the Ministry of War Transport set up the Road Haulage Consultative Committee for the purpose of consultation between the Ministry and accredited representatives of A and B licensed hauliers on matters of common interest. This committee provided a most useful medium for the exchange of views between the Ministry and the industry and much good work was done.

The Ministry Haulage Scheme

When the Ministry of War Transport embarked on its first Road Haulage Scheme in 1941, the Standing Joint Committee was instrumental in prevailing upon the Minister to set up the Road Haulage (Operations) Advisory Committee, consisting of members drawn from the industry upon the recommendations of the Standing Joint Committee. At the end of 1941, this scheme was superseded by the present Government Road Haulage Organisation and again the Standing Joint Committee set up a series of panels to advise the Ministry and to be available for consultation.

It must, however, be noted that whilst being

prepared to co-operate with the Ministry in the operation of the scheme, the Standing Joint Committee took no part in its formulation. The Minister, when announcing the scheme to the Standing Joint Committee, stated that whilst the broad principles of the plan must be accepted as settled, he would be ready to consider any constructive suggestions that might be forthcoming in regard to the application of the principles and intimated his willingness to consult with the Standing Joint Committee. A number of recommendations has accordingly been made from time to time, but no opinion has been expressed by the Standing Joint Committee as to whether the scheme represents the best way of achieving the objects in view.

Whilst the industry dislikes Government control, at the same time it is appreciated that if the needs of a nation at war dictate such a course, then the industry must accept the position. Road transport is proud of the part that it has been privileged to play, and of the contribution it has been able to make to the war effort.

Food for drivers

The Standing Joint Committee, together with the trade unions and through the Road Haulage Central Wages Board and the Road Transport Catering and Accommodation Joint Committee, has made every possible effort to ensure adequate facilities for rest and refreshment for road transport workers, particularly under recent wartime conditions. Conferences have taken place from time to time regarding staffs, with the Ministry of Food in connection supplies of food, and with the Ministry of War Transport a on a variety of general questions. Difficulties created by the war cannot be entirely overcome, but nevertheless considerable improvements have been effected. Apart from dealing with short-term difficulties, long-term policy is receiving careful



The ubiquitous motor vehicle picks up wool on the Galloway Hills in Scotland and delivers it in the West Riding next day — two Albion five-tonners authorised for 30 m.p.h. running.

consideration and it is to be hoped that as a result of the action now being taken, the driver's food position throughout the country will, during the next few years, be established on a firm and stable basis.

Result of individual enterprise

The road transport industry has been built up on the initiative and enterprise of the individual. In this connection size is no criterion and if the road transport industry is to continue to thrive and to serve the community to the best advantage, the small man, who played his part so well in the blitz period, must be preserved. This is in pursuance of the fundamental principle that the services an operator can give to the public, his efficiency, and his compliance with statutory requirements must alone constitute the determining

factors as to his right to continue to operate irrespective of the size of his fleet. The initiative and enterprise of the individual operator must not be stifled by regimentation. There is a growing realisation of the tremendously important part which transport plays in the life of the community; if the community is to derive the full advantages of the service which road transport can give, bureaucratic control, whether in the form of nationalisation or otherwise, must be resisted with all the power that can be mustered. It has been well said that the least Government-governed is often the best governed.

I have had the honour to be chairman of the Committee since its inception. I welcome this opportunity of saying how much I have appreciated the support of my colleagues in accomplishing the difficult tasks with which we have been faced. Our thanks are due, too, to Mr Quick Smith LL.B, who has been secretary of the Committee throughout its existence, and to his staff.

Report in the Wrexham Advertiser 24 February 1923

FATAL STREET ACCIDENT at PENYCAE



The Inquest

An inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of Mr Jonathan Davies, Stryt Issa, Penycæ was held on Saturday morning at the Wesleyan Chapel, Stryt Issa, by Mr Llewellyn Kenrick, East Denbighshire coroner and a jury, Mr E Gough being foreman.

Jonathan Davies, Stryt Issa, son, said that if his father had lived until the next day (Sunday) he would have been 75 years of age. He was at one time a roadman in the employ of the County Council. He was somewhat deaf, but his sight was good.

Edward Jones, miner, Fronheulog, Penycæ, said that he was riding through Pant about 2.30 on Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 13, when he noticed the deceased in the middle of the roadway collecting manure. A greengrocer's cart, driven by George Hughes, was travelling in the same direction as witness, at a sharp trot. Hughes's attention was drawn by a half-wit, who shouted at everybody who passed through Pant, and then apparently, deceased was run over, being hit on the head with the shaft of the cart. There was nothing to obstruct the driver's view, and by exercising great care he could have passed on either side of the man. The man was taken to a house near by, and died one hour after the accident - five minutes after he had been removed to his own house.

Foreman of the Jury: Do you think the driver would have seen the deceased before the half-wit? I don't know. He was sitting on the opposite side of the cart.

Hannah Smith of Pant Shop, said she had heard the half-wit dancing outside the shop. She wondered what was the matter, and looking through the window she saw the horse and trap coming. She saw deceased look up and down the road, and eventually faced towards the oncoming trap, and she came to the conclusion that he had seen the trap. She did not actually see the accident.

George Hughes, greengrocer and fishmonger of Bank Street, Ponkey, said that about 2.30 on a Wednesday afternoon, he was driving a flat cart from Stryt Issa in the direc-

tion of Rhos. After passing under Pant Bridge, he noticed the deceased gathering manure in the middle of the road. He looked in the direction of the cart, and witness decided that he was aware of the cart's approach. Knowing that man was deaf, he shouted in a loud voice, "Get out of the way, Jonathan". Seeing that he did not move, he drew the horse and cart to one side, very close to the wall, but hearing a groan, he realised that something had happened. In his opinion the man was struck by the nave of the wheel.

The Coroner: At what speed were you travelling? — Six or seven miles an hour; as fast as you could walk.

Can you walk six or seven miles an hour? — For a wager, I could. The Coroner: Then you've missed your vocation. The Coroner asked if he knew the half-wit to whom reference had been made, and he replied "Yes".

The Coroner: Some of the witnesses suggest that he was performing antics, and shouted and you turned your head? — That is not true.

The Coroner: Supposing it had been a child in the old man's place, what would you have done? — I would have pulled up.

Then why didn't you stop in this case? — I expected him to get out of the road.

Then because he did not go as you expected, you went on? — I can't contradict that.

The Coroner, in summing up, said that there was no doubt as to cause of deceased's death, but it was necessary for the jury to decide whether anyone was to be blamed for his death. The driver had given his evidence fairly; but was he justified in going on when the man did not move? The law was quite clear on the matter and he had gone into the case very thoroughly, because there were many accidents where people were being knocked down. Really the streets were becoming perilous the way some people were driving. After all, the pedestrian had first right to the road, although he was not entitled to obstruct traffic. It was for the jury to decide whether or not there had been negligence in this case.

After an absence of ten minutes, the jury returned, and the foreman announced that their unanimous verdict was that the deceased was "Accidentally and by misadventure killed" They decided that driver had done all in his power to draw deceased's attention.

Book Reviews

BENTLEY MOTORS 1945 – 1964 ~ Malcolm Bobbitt
 Nostalgia Road Publications – Classic Marques
 Volume Nine; 8¼" x 8" softback; 52 pages;
 93 b/w and 11 colour illustrations;
 ISBN 1 903016 60-6; £7.95

Your reviewer is on unfamiliar ground. I have been interested in vehicles of all kinds for over sixty years, a tractor driver from the age of 7 and owner of ordinary family saloons since 1958. But to the best of my knowledge I have never ridden in a Bentley, and certainly never driven one; this is the first Nostalgia Road book I have read; and I come for the first time to the writings of Malcolm Bobbitt. So I review with appropriate humility.

The book is largely pictorial, with roughly three fifths of the total page area devoted to photographs and two fifths to photo captions and narrative text. Some of the images are published for the first time. Quite a lot of the text is repeated in the captions – making it possible to follow the story either from the pictures or the main text, in the style of the Rupert Bear annuals.

Starting with the company's establishment by Walter Owen Bentley in 1919, and passing on through Rolls-Royce ownership in the 1930s, the story continues up to 1945. Beginning in Baker Street, "WO" set up his factory in Cricklewood in 1921, production moving to Derby after the Rolls-Royce take over, and finally transferring in 1946 to the wartime aero engine factory at Crewe.

There follows the story of Bentley development during the twenty years immediately after the war, not forgetting the people who designed, engineered, styled and built the cars. We read of the Mk VI announced in May 1946 at ten times the price of a Morris 8; the R-type introduced in September 1952; the S-series unveiled at the London Motor Show in 1955; and the famous Continental sports and convertible versions. Throughout the period Bentley cars continued to be built on separate chassis, using mainly bought-in steel bodyshells from Pressed Steel meaning that, contrary to pre-war practice, building complete cars was now the norm. But cars with bodies from traditional coachbuilders also remained available, 1,480 being built in the period compared with 12,456 standard steel saloons.

The book concludes with a brief look at the kinds of people – all so elegantly dressed – who owned and drove Bentleys in the post war years, their demands and expectations, and the quality of the after-sales care and service available.

The author has written four other books about Bentley. In this volume he gives us much in broad terms about engine sizes and performance, chassis design, styling, interior luxury, and the pleasures of driving a Bentley. But do not look for detailed engineering specifications and technical descriptions. This is not a work of reference for the engineer or the in-depth historian. Rather it is designed, as the publisher says, to be "an evocative account of these beautifully made cars which echo the

firm's sporting prowess of earlier generations". In this it succeeds extremely well, conjuring up an ambience and atmosphere of opulence and affluence quite out of tune with the austerity of the early post-war years. We are told that it was an act of deliberate policy to put the Mk VI on the market ahead of a new Rolls-Royce model because the Bentley monogram was a little less hooty-tooty at a time when "Rolls-Royces and ration books were hardly synonymous".

This pervasive sense of luxury and quality, excellence and beauty is for me the most salient feature of the book. The adjectives of excellence come thick and fast: "distinctive", "revered", "exquisite", "fastest and most expensive", "most desirable" all appearing in the half-page Introduction alone. We are in a world so good that it almost seems too good to be true.

But even the best have some faults. Braking on the Mk VI "required a determined effort in an emergency stop", its boot was too small and the boot lid leaked. A quirk of the S-series was the need to remove panels in the inner wheel arches to change the spark plugs!

Who was Olga? And the Scalded Cat? What is the sneeze factor? If you don't already know, the book will tell you.

An informative read for a newcomer, a nostalgic one for those more familiar with the marque. While clear and straightforward, for me the book rises to no great heights of style – and I do not like "different to". I spotted fewer misprints than usual nowadays – but can anyone read the number plates in the picture on page 52?

I have enjoyed the book and learned a lot.

Paul Jefford

WEST RIDING 1 (West Riding Automobile Co. Ltd)
 Super Prestige Series Number Six ISBN 1-898432-95-3
WEST RIDING 2 (South Yorkshire and Bullocks)
 Super Prestige Series Number Eight ISBN 1-898432-40-6
 by David W Allen
 Published by Venture Publications
 Series Editor John Banks
 Price £16.95 each

These two companion volumes are welcome additions to the Super Prestige Series and maintain the high standard that one has come to expect from Venture Publications. David Allen has produced two books that are sure to find a place on the bookshelf of those with an interest in the history and development of bus services in Wakefield and the surrounding towns. Each book contains a concise history of the operator, tracing the development of the company, its route network, vehicles, and the key individuals who played a leading role in these developments. The setting of route diagrams from very different periods on the same or an adjacent page is a most effective way of showing just how much the network changed over the years. There are some delightful plates of timetable covers and vehicle advertisements of the

period, some of which would benefit from a supporting caption. The company histories are followed by the story of the fleet with a superb range of photographs that have very obviously been selected by the author with a great deal of care. The accompanying captions include a wealth of detail and are highly informative, whilst a section of colour photographs at the back of each book serves to remind the reader of a world of liveries that is now long gone.

The West Riding Automobile Company grew to become the largest independent bus operator in the country, though the story could easily have been very different. Early in 1950 the company entered into negotiations to sell the business to the British Transport Commission but these stalled over disagreement about the purchase price. Shortly thereafter the company merged with J. Bullock & Sons [B&S Motor Services] (dealt with in Volume 2) and was to retain its independence for another 17 years. A minor point is the reference to the railway companies receiving power to invest in bus companies under the Road Traffic Act of 1930 when the authority was granted under the Railway (Road Transport) Acts of 1928. The West Riding Company, of course, was to become forever associated with the Guy Wulfrunian - a revolutionary design of bus that damaged both the manufacturer and operator. In 1967 West Riding old out to the then Transport Holding Company (precursor to the National Bus Company). Within two years Bristol Lodekka's drafted in from other from other THC operators heralded the premature replacement of the Wulfrunians. The story post-privatisation is an interesting one with the company consolidating its position by acquiring the neighbouring business of South Yorkshire Road Transport (covered in Volume 2) in 1994 and now forms part of the Arriva Group.

The story of Bullocks and South Yorkshire Motors are inextricably linked. The early days reveal the enterprising spirit of the age with the South Yorkshire Company starting a service between Leeds and London in 1926 – a considerable feat for a small company. Financial success proved elusive and three years later the company went into liquidation and was purchased by Ernest Bullock, who later with his son Reg, ran the firm alongside their tractor, agricultural and car dealership businesses. Between 1968 and 1973 changes in management and strategy led to the re-constitution of the bus company as a separate entity. One peculiarity of South Yorkshire's operations was the provision of fully crewed services until 1987, when one-person-operation was introduced. Seven years later the company was sold to Caldaire Group and has long been subsumed as part of Arriva.

Bullocks had an equally interesting and varied history, tracing development and operation of buses prior to the First World War. James Bullock and his six sons developed a wide variety of business interests and after the cessation of hostilities the company expanded rapidly. In the mid-1920s negotiations to merge with the West Riding Company collapsed, largely due to internal disagreement among the Bullock family. A few years later the disagreement led to High Court action following which Ernest Bullock left and purchased the ailing South Yorkshire Motors. Thereafter J. Bullock & Sons (1928) Ltd., trading as B&S Motor Services, enjoyed a fairly peaceful existence, finally merging with West Riding in 1950. From all accounts the B&S Sports and Social Club remains active and is the only reminder of a company that is long gone but not forgotten.

Kevin Hey
Salford Business School
University of Salford

Book Notice

THE BOX ~ Marc Levinson.
Princeton University Press, Woodstock, 2006
376 pages hardback ISBN 0 691 12324 1 £15-99

The sub-title says it all: "How the shipping container made the world smaller and the world economy bigger". Written by an American economist and originally published in the USA, there is a strong, though not exclusive, concentration on the American experience. This is consonant with the evolution of containerisation in its modern form (not forgetting the railways' pioneering use of much smaller containers in the UK), for it was Malcom [sic] McLean, the founder of McLean Trucking of North Carolina, who adapted a 'a long-used transportation formula' to initiate the container revolution by road, rail, sea and air, which is at the heart of modern transportation and industrial location.

Although Levinson does not deal with the effects of container traffic on road and rail transport provision in the UK, he does give some detail of the upheaval it caused to UK ports, complicated by the implacable opposition of traditional dock labour to the new *modus operandi*. He

notes how Felixstowe was able to advantage of its non-militant labour force, whilst Tilbury struggled with labour problems. As Levinson comments, Felixstowe's fortune was at the expense of the cramped, traditional docks of the Port of London, which also suffered from the opening of Tilbury. Further north, he records that an early container traffic from Grangemouth was Scottish whisky, which found an ideal, pilferage-free passage to the United States in stainless steel tank containers.

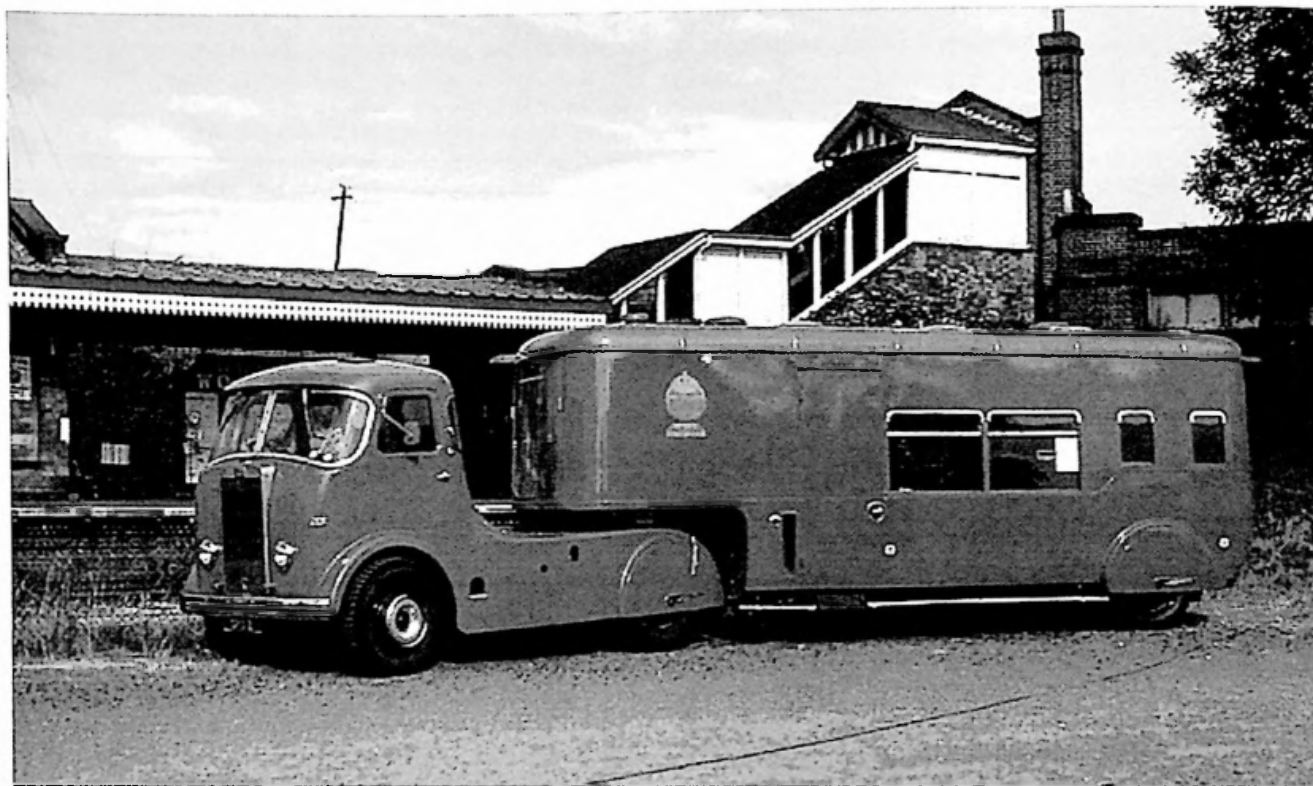
The study is a model of a scholarly work, with very full end-notes and bibliography, and makes a valuable complement to David Lowe's recent intermodal study (Elsevier, 2005)* In conclusion, one might remark that its publication more or less coincides with the almost hysterical opposition of some sections of American political and economic life to Dubai Ports World acquisition of P & O Ports.

Richard Storey

* "Intermodal Freight Transport" by our member, David Lowe, was reviewed in *Newsletter* 45.

Mobile Post Office GPO 2 ~ A Remarkable Survivor

POST OFFICE VEHICLE CLUB



To commemorate the centenary of the first motor vehicle purchased by the General Post Office the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is displaying vehicles from its collection at various events around the country. The highlight of the programme will be the first public viewing of the newly restored mobile post office, GPO 2, at Coventry Transport Museum as part of the "Moving the Mail" exhibition. The BPMA, custodian of Royal Mail's fleet of historic vehicles and artefacts, successfully obtained a PRISM (Preservation of Industrial and Science Material) grant to restore the famous 1937 Mobile Post Office trailer and its 1957 Seddon Mk V motive unit.

In the late thirties two mobile Post Offices were built on Brockhouse single-axle semi-trailer chassis, and were originally towed by Morris Leader normal-control motive units fitted with streamlined coachwork in the style of period. The units were given special registrations GPO 1 and GPO 2¹, and were designed to provide postal, telegram, telegraph and telephone services at major events. However before entering service as intended the Second World War intervened and they were repainted in camouflage and converted to mobile coastal radio stations. Strategically located at Harrogate and Cambridge, with crews and equipment at the ready, they could quickly be taken to replace a station put out of action by the enemy. Once peace returned they spent a quarter of a century touring the country attending agricultural shows and sporting events, and such was the demand that a third

unit was built, hauled by a 1961 Morris FF motive unit registered GPO 3.

The Morris Leaders were replaced by new Seddons in 1957, also carrying the registrations GPO 1 and GPO 2, and the units gave excellent service until both were replaced in the late sixties and early seventies by Karrier tenders towing modern caravans. GPO 1 was sold for further use as an exhibition unit but ended its days on a farm in the North East; the registration still survives on a 4x4. GPO 2 spent eight years in the open in a scrapyard at Market Drayton before being repurchased and fully refurbished at Corby Central Repair Depot in the early eighties. After seven winters without antifreeze the mechanics changed the oil and filters, connected a new battery and it started, a testament to the high standard of maintenance by the Post Office. Its new life as a preserved vehicle was short-lived, however, as it was run into from behind on the M1 on its way from an event; the trailer was destroyed and the Seddon seriously damaged. The remains were stored at Corby for some time until the unit was partially rebuilt by Papworth Industries in 1992, involving the construction of a new timber frame and aluminium panelling for the trailer and repairs to the motive unit. The job was not completed and with the loss of undercover storage it spent some time in the open at Wolverhampton workshop in the company of vehicles declared surplus by the National Postal Museum. Various details were never completed during the first rebuild and the weather and vandalism took their toll with corrosion apparent in both the Seddon and trailer, and all glass was missing. In outline the rebuilt trailer is a fairly good replica of the original but is obviously wrong in several

¹ Registration mark GPO was specially transferred from West Sussex County Council to London County Council in 1936.

details – the doors are too tall, the wheel arches are semi-circular rather than being flared, and there is no recess for the extending canvas canopy that protected customers and members of the press at events. For reasons of practicality and cost the actual construction of the new frame was not to the original specification – American ash instead of virtually unobtainable English variety, and the detailing of joints is wrong, but all will be covered by panelling so it is not really important.

With PRISM funding the external restoration is now being progressed, and Cartwrights of Altrincham were chosen to carry out the work. The firm is a major supplier of bodies and trailers to Royal Mail and after fifty years is still family owned by Alan Cartwright and his sons. Alan is now in his seventies and took on the challenge enthusiastically, wanting to put something back into the industry that has been his livelihood for so long. Modern vehicles are assembled from mass-produced components but the Cartwright factory is unusual in retaining a woodworking shop and also has an Aladdin's cave of obsolete spare parts known as Alan's store. A skilled coachbuilder was brought out of retirement to undertake the restoration using traditional skills. The newly restored Mobile Post Office GPO 2 should have been star of the open day at the BPMA store at Debden last year but stripping down both the 1957 Seddon and the 1938 trailer revealed unforeseen botched repairs and extensive rot which is taking longer than expected to rectify, so for the time being it remains at Cartwrights at Altrincham.

Classic postal vehicles from the British Postal Museum and Archive collection will be on show around the UK during 2006. The Museum is sending mail vans, cycles, motorcycles, and the mobile post office to transport museums in the Midlands, Scotland and North Wales to celebrate the centenary of GPO motor transport.

There will be a small but varied selection of BPMA

vehicles at two events at The Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire this summer. You will be able to see the replica of a 1910 Dennis delivery van, a genuine 1930s Morris van, and a copy of a 1880s 'Hen and Chicks' Pentacycle, a standard cycle and a modern Mailstar machine all at the Best of British Festival, on 28th May 2006. The vehicles will remain at the Heritage Motor Centre for the Classic Commercial Motor Show on 10th – 11th June 2006, which will also be attended by privately preserved GPO/PO/BT vehicles. See www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk.

From July to September 2006, the biggest GPO vehicle display this year will be at the Coventry Transport Museum - Moving the Mail exhibition. Vehicles previously on display at the Heritage Motor Centre will be joined in Coventry by a BSA Bantam motorcycle, two more Morris postal vans, the horse-drawn van and mailcoach. The highlight of this display will be the first public view of the recently restored mobile post office GPO 2. The vehicles will be part of a new exhibition on the history of carrying mail by road - Moving the Mail: From horseshoes to horsepower. There will be space for other restored vehicles at this exhibition, so please let us know if you are willing to loan one for the summer. Watch out for the online version later this year; www.transport-museum.com

The Grampian Transport Museum, Aberdeenshire already has a BSA Bantam motorcycle and a late 1930s Morris mail van on loan, and you can see these fine vehicles in Scotland until 31st October 2006. Visit www.gtm.org.uk

The National Cycle Collection in Mid Wales will have one of the wonderful 'Hen and Chicks' Pentacycles on loan from May 2006 for twelve months. The 'Hen and Chicks' cycle is a relation of the Penny Farthing, but with four small wheels around one large centre wheel for extra balance. See www.cyclemuseum.org.uk

"Companion to British Road Haulage History"

The launch of the second book published under the auspices of the Roads and Road Transport History Association, "75 Years of Traffic Commissioners – a lawyer's personal view" (see front page of this *Newsletter*), is an opportune time to remind ourselves of the first book, the "Companion to British Road Haulage History". It is still on sale (particulars in a later paragraph); but the first purpose of this note is to show the usefulness, and reliability, of the "Companion". Your Editor felt that two items in *Newsletter* merited a quick cross-check with the "Companion". Both checks were successful, and they merit a tribute to the wide coverage and accuracy of the entries in the "Companion"

The article "United Action in Road Transport" has as its major theme the setting up of the Standing Joint Committee of Road Hauliers' National Organisations, in 1938. There are entries in the "Companion" that complement and coincide with the article, not only on the Standing Joint Committee itself, but also via entries on

several of the constituent bodies, such as the National Road Transport Employers' Federation.

The "Member's Query" on another page of *Newsletter*, on half-cab lorries, whilst not answered 100% in the "Companion", receives an answer not far short of 95%, and the "Companion" actually illustrates at Fig.183, a Ham River AEC Mercury lorry of the late 1950s, which could not be more apposite.

Members who do not yet have the "Companion" and are interested in road haulage, can still obtain one (and at a price well below its original sale price). It is on sale at £24.95 post free from Nynehead Books. It can be ordered by e-mail from www.Nynehead-books.co.uk, or by post or telephone from Nynehead Books, The Old Dairy, East Nynehead, Wellington, Somerset TA21 0DA. Tel.: 01823 461997.

Bates of Southport ~ an interesting dairy

ROGER DE BOER

When I retired from the Civil Service the other week, after over forty years service, amongst the well-wishing cards I received was a computer-made one showing four views of milk floats: a line up of Reading Co-op Smiths NCBs, a Walkthru float, another NCB and, lastly, a Bates of Southport Ross. Ross is a Southport chassis builder.

I was delighted with this gesture and was immediately reminded of Bates' existence. I first encountered them by chance on a trip to Southport with the now defunct South Birmingham Transport Society in the 1980s. As we travelled to our destination at the transport museum, an ex-Chinese laundry Brush, rebodied to milk float by Cocker (also of Southport), passed us in the opposite direction. Its shape was of sufficient interest to demand a photo; it was one of two such vans that one has now reached the realms of preservation at Wythall. At the moment of the sighting, I possessed little cash and had to borrow some to hire a bicycle to find the dairy, whilst my companions visited the museum.

One of the two vans was in course of repainting, and not available to be photographed in full livery. As might be

expected, there was a strong contingent of Ross floats in the 18-strong fleet – supporting home industry. Also Smiths were represented with a solid-tyred NCB and a Roundsman – a type only encountered elsewhere with Kidderminster and Colchester Co-ops.

The failure to capture both Brush floats in full livery decided me to visit Bates again, also in the 1980s. This time, the motorbike was used to transport me. When passing through Warrington en route, I saw a Unigate electric float of a type not known – so I pursued it for photographic purposes. However, the driver-milkman took offence at this, and I was attacked by him (usually it is the other way round), and my camera landed in a rose bush in somebody's front garden. Fortunately, no damage was done, and the milkman was persuaded to have his float recorded on film.

Bates are to be found on a website (*Milk Float Corner ~ www.milkfloats.org.uk/*), with fleet list and photos. I presume my office well-wisher had surfed the net to create his unique greetings card, which was much appreciated.

Wartime Notices on Coventry Corporation Buses

Supplied by GILES FEARNLEY

BOYS

The supply of soap is restricted.
Please keep your feet off the panels inside the bus

PLEASE "BE PREPARED"

In order to economise in fuel and rubber, the Ministry of War Transport require a number of stops to be removed on all bus routes. Due notice will be given when this is being effected.

REMOVAL OF BUS STOPS

Thanks are due to so many people for the tolerant way in which they have accepted the removal of bus stops.

YOUNG SCHOOLBOYS AND SCHOOLGIRLS

The conductor is required to direct young schoolboys and schoolgirls to the lower saloon where she can better look after them

SHELTER "TWO DEEP"

More Passenger Shelters are being erected as labour and material permit.
To make the best use of these, please queue "Two deep".

A REMINDER ON SMOKING

We are requested to issue a reminder that the peacetime rule prohibiting smoking in the lower saloon of double-deck buses still applies, both on normal services and on works services.

HALT SIGNS AND TRAFFIC LIGHTS

It is desirable to warn the travelling public that halt signs and traffic lights are not places to board or leave buses.
This notice is given in the interest of safety.

CHEVRON

It will be of interest to note that the small silver chevron on the left sleeve of a woman conductor's uniform indicates that she has been employed in important public service for two years.

A REMINDER

We hope you remember our repeated requests to use the EARLIER bus. *Please try.*

April 26th 1943

CLOCKS AND WATCHES

Due to the absence of watches, electric clocks have been made available at the following junctions:

Trinity Street and Hales Street
Jordan Well and Cox Street
Corporation Street and Bishop Street
Other will follow

May 17th 1943

BUSY SATURDAY

Housewives – please make a speciality of leaving the city not later than 12 noon any Saturday, before the works close.

May 14th 1943