

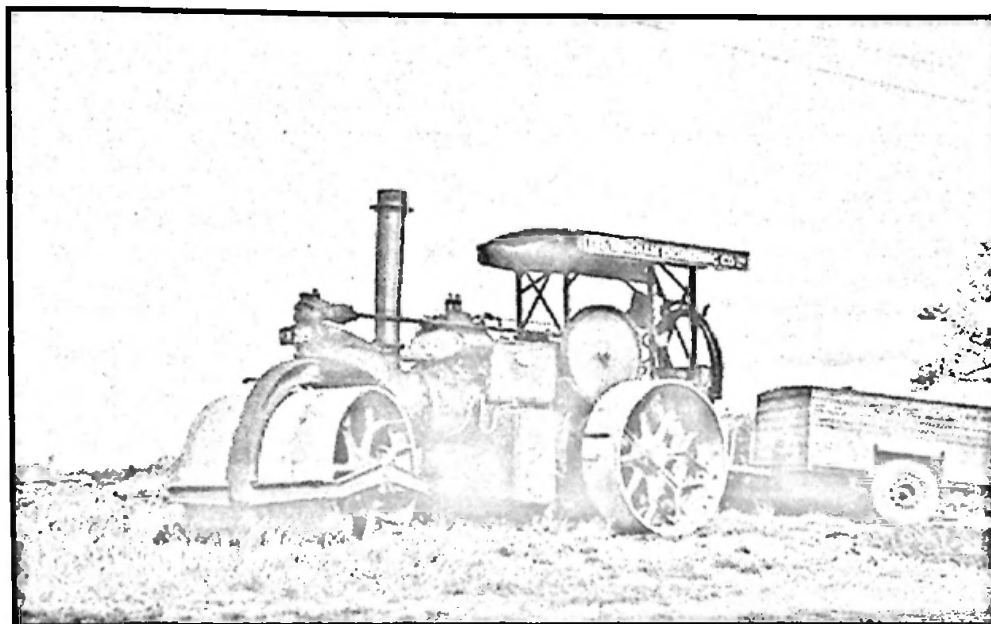
Newsletter

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A Final Sighting ?

Forty years ago, almost exactly, there was no question but to pull up and take this photograph, for what had once been a commonplace was then a rarity and almost certainly the last time such a sight was to be seen. This was not a steam roller in preservation or on its way to some vintage gathering, but a working machine still engaged on road maintenance duties.

Taken at Preston in East Kent, it was about four miles from its owner's base. Wingham Engineering Co. Ltd was a long standing local agricultural contractor who had many diversifications over the years, but who stayed loyal to many traditional aspects of their trade.

A lengthy conversation with the driver of KM2129 found him roundly cursing the remainder of the crew who were late arriving with the requisite material for the resurfacing contract. It was not an altogether unfamiliar scenario, younger men imbued into a motor age did not fully appreciate that his charge continued to consume fuel and, importantly, water, whilst he waited. An elderly retainer of the firm, he explained that they still found it convenient to send him and his roller out on not too distant contracts from time to time, but doubted if it would continue once he was gone. So it proved, passing the depot about a year later found KM2129 standing neglected, in a corner and clearly no longer in use.

D J Bubier

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Two Significant Strikes ~ 1919 and 1921

ROGER ATKINSON

John Hibbs' article "A Small Essex Town", (*Newsletter* 49, p.7) places the diversion of passenger traffic from rail to road in Brightlingsea as probably having taken place in 1919. and remarks "Railway managers – like bus managers later – failed to realise that they were in the competitive business of moving people".

It was raised in a much earlier *Newsletter*, (No.2, with follow-up in No.3) that there were two major railway curtailments in the early post-Great War period, a short railway strike in September/October 1919 and a lengthy coal miners' strike from April to July, 1921. No firm conclusions were reached in the earlier airing in *Newsletter*, but I now tender some evidence that the 1919 strike brought home the potential for moving 'goods' by road, and that it was the 1921 miners' strike that opened the eyes of the public to moving 'people' by road. The distinction may not be quite as clear-cut as that; indeed, in another article in this *Newsletter*, O C Power recalls the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co Ltd ('Midland Red') running long-distance services to London, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Derby even during the 1919 strike. However, I suggest that the evidence still favours the 1921 strike as the real boost to bus services.

The ending of the war in November 1918 had left a huge residue of motor lorries available for disposal by the military authorities; but it took until 1921 before motor buses had become fairly easy to buy. Consider, for example, the "lorry-buses" that had to be introduced by the London General Omnibus Co. Ltd in 1919, because proper motor buses were unobtainable, but lorries were.

The 1919 railway strike began technically at midnight, but for practical purposes at 10.00 pm, on Saturday 26 September 1919. It ended in the afternoon of Sunday 5 October 1919. It was a strike called by the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF). Membership of these two unions was claimed to be NUR 416,000 and ASLEF 47,000. These figures, as well the details of goods carried by rail shown in the newspaper extracts which follow, emphasise the huge importance of the railways at that time.

"The Times", Tuesday 29 September 1919

LONDON'S MILK

~ ~ ~

MEANS TO ASSURE THE SUPPLY

The following is a brief summary of the arrangements made by the Ministry of Food to meet the emergency created by the railway strike: –

MILK (London and provincial scheme).

The question of supplying London with milk presents considerable difficulty in consequence of the enormous quantity consumed and the great distances that have to be covered. The counties from which these supplies have to be drawn are parcelled out into

districts within a radius of 100 miles. The farmers take this milk to pre-arranged stops where it is collected by motor lorries and conveyed to Hyde Park. Over 1,000 lorries are engaged on this work, and at least 72,000 miles will be covered daily. From Hyde Park, which is being used as a clearing station, wholesalers draw their supplies, and pass them on to retailers in the ordinary way. Nearly 9,000 churns are collected daily from farmers and factories. In view of a possible emergency, a large quantity of milk had been placed in cold stores, in London, so that on Saturday and Sunday consumers had at least 50% of their usual quantities, and in many cases, more.

Lorries returning to the country with empty milk cans take back as full a cargo of foodstuffs as possible, which are moved from the docks by horse transport to Hyde Park.

The milk scheme of the Ministry is not confined to London, but is in operation throughout the whole of Great Britain, with the result that in the big provincial centres, from the start, the supply has been almost normal. Nearly 5,000 lorries are engaged on supplying milk throughout the country. It will be understood that the daily petrol requirements amount to many thousands of gallons.

YEAST. The public has little appreciation of the importance of yeast to the daily life of the community, over 700 tons of this fundamental essential being used per week by housewives, bakers and others, and practically the whole of this is produced by distilleries in Scotland and Ireland. In the ordinary way the Irish yeast crosses by the mail boat to Liverpool, and is dispersed through the country over the various railways, whilst the Scotch yeast is sent almost from the distilleries to the housewife's door or to the baker's shop.

In making their arrangements the Ministry of Food had practically to put into operation a service which would not partially, but entirely, supplement the usual method of distribution, as everybody must have yeast.

The Ministry scheme is shortly this. Yeast is brought from the distilleries in Ireland and the distilleries in Scotland by Admiralty steamer and landed at convenient ports around the coast. From these ports it is conveyed to inland Bulk Distribution Centres. It is transported by means of small Ford and other motor vans to the very doors of those who have to use it.

.....

SALE OF GOVERNMENT MOTORS STOPPED

The Ministry of Munitions, together with the Disposal Board, are making arrangements to place every possible vehicle that is in running order at the disposal of the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Food, with whom they are working in close co-operation. All sales of motor vehicles belonging to the Government have been suspended.

"The Times", Wednesday, 8 October 1919

FUTURE OF THE MOTOR LORRY

Before the railway strike and its revelation of what could be done in the way of organising an efficient motor transport service, the Port and Transit Committee had expressed a belief that if a fleet of Government motor lorries were placed at their disposal they would be able to relieve to a considerable extent the breakdown in the system of inland distribution which has contributed so seriously to congestion at the docks. The lessons learned during the strike have emphasised the value of the Committee's suggestion, and the lorries are now to be used to clear the dock warehouses and wharves.

The exact number of vehicles to be used for this work is not yet known, but something like a thousand lorries may be turned on to Liverpool alone. By the end of last week, the Government were using for road transport no fewer than 25,000 motor vehicles in addition to all kinds of horse transport. Many of these had been requisitioned from private firms and are to be returned to their owners without delay. The War Office lorries will remain and can be made available for the new service, which is to relieve the congestion on the railways, at the ports, and in manufacturing centres.

PRICE OF PETROL

The use of lorries to clear the docks will provide further experience to show how far road transport of this kind is a practical proposition for commercial purposes. In some quarters it is represented that until petrol falls in price the motor lorry is too expensive for long-distance traffic. The more efficient lorries used by the Government were capable of running eight to nine miles on a consumption of one gallon of spirit, but most of the vehicles would not do more than six miles to the gallon. Lubricating oil, labour and depreciation bring the cost per ton per mile to a fairly heavy figure. The Ministry of Food charged traders making use of their transport 6d per ton per mile. In the case of dock congestion, any loss in working, as the Port and Transit Committee have pointed out, will be more than offset by a lessening of the enormous loss resulting from the detention of ships which are unable to discharge their cargoes.

An interesting feature of last week's transport work, which has not so far been mentioned, is concerned with the carriage of hay. At one period, London was practically without hay, and there was serious danger of the horses suffering. The matter was immediately taken in hand by the Road Transport Board of the Ministry of Food and some thousands of tons were brought in from Berkshire and Hertfordshire chiefly by means of steam engines, which dragged two trailers capable of carrying eighteen tons between them. In order that proper distribution should be ensured, the hay on reaching London was handed over to the Forage Committee of the War Office.

1921, a part of a passage in R&RTHA Newsletter No.2 is repeated:

"Two forms of passenger transport were, at that time, heavily dependent upon coal: the railways and the electric trams.

"I have been to the National Tramway Museum archive at Crich and found various references in *Tramway & Railway World* from 30 April 1921, through the issues in May and into June, recording major reductions. For example, Blackpool Corporation - Sunday services off altogether; Bradford and Derby Corporations 25% reductions in services; and other towns between 20% and 50% reductions.¹ The Board of Trade then announced further restrictions on the use of coal, gas and electricity.²

"By mid-May, a Halifax Corporation Emergency Committee had arranged for local charabancs to cover tram routes on Sundays.³ On the other hand, before the end of May, it was reported that the Leeds Corporation trams had resumed Sunday services, but the Committee complained that charas were still working to Roundhay in competition with the trams.⁴"

Footnotes:

- 1 *Tramway & Railway World* 30 April 1921
- 2 *Ibid.* 7 May 1921
- 3 *Ibid.* 21 May 1921
- 4 *Ibid.* 28 May 1921

Additional evidence can now be put forward. Indeed, the first piece which follows is not entirely one-sided. Chapter 38 in Volume 2 of J Soper's monumental history of Leeds Transport (Leeds Transport History Society, 1996) deals with Charabancs and the Private Bus Invasion and is well worth reading. Very briefly, *The Yorkshire Post*, is cited as complaining about charabancs and the rowdy misbehaviour of their occupants as early as August 1919. Also, in the aftermath of the brief period during the 1921 miners' strike when charabancs were permitted to ply between the city and Roundhay Park on Saturdays and Sundays [mentioned above], the police were instructed to prevent charabancs picking up passengers at Roundhay Park. One proprietor is reported to have said that "As soon as people saw a charabanc, they made a rush for it".

In Geoffrey Hilditch's *Halifax Passenger Transport* (reviewed in *Newsletter* 49), he comments on the permission [mentioned above] for local charabanc proprietors to operate services within the Borough on Sundays: "Needless to say, a very motley collection of rolling stock, many of the charabanc form, came to be employed, giving their owners an inkling of what could be possible".

Again, O C Power in his article reproduced in this *Newsletter*, also recalls Midland Red buses substituting for curtailed electric trams in Birmingham, on a Sunday in May 1921.

Turning now to the coal miners' strike that began in April

Turning now to other sources, let us mention the resourcefulness of our nation in times of adversity. Two brief extracts from *The Times* of Tuesday 17 May, 1921:

If a Whitsuntide holiday depends upon perfect weather, then yesterday was a perfect holiday. There may have been few train services, but thousands of people got themselves transported yesterday over quite considerable distances.

.....

The crowds of holiday-makers who hoped to pay their holiday expenses by attending race meetings and backing winners were amazingly large, at Hurst Park, Wolverhampton and Redcar. Quite a number of favourites won and some people – it is to be feared not all – won sufficient to pay their expenses. As usual, the bookmakers went away, in magnificent motor cars, claiming that they had had a bad day.

But *The Times* was taking the prospect of the Whitsuntide holiday in a more serious vein a few days earlier, on Tuesday 10 May, 1921, with an article on “WHITSUN A ROAD FESTIVAL A CHARABANC ‘BOOM’”

Given fine weather, the Whitsuntide holiday will be a festival of the open road. The restricted railway services will offer small inducement to holidaymakers with other means of transport at their disposal, to travel by train., and while more motor car owners than ever will be using their cars for holiday purposes, humbler persons will travel by road in the motor charabancs which are now more numerous than ever.

.....

It was the railway strike in 1919 which gave motor transport its first real chance to demonstrate its utility, and the coal trouble is likely to give the motor charabanc very useful assistance in establishing itself. The railway companies regarded with some alarm the inroads made on their passenger traffic by this class of vehicle last year, and were hoping by aid of excursion fares to regain their former unchallenged position with regard to trippers.

Instead, the Whitsuntide holiday will see no railway excursions at cheap fares and there will be more charabancs on the road than ever. Many owners of charabancs hesitated to pay the heavy licence duties to which they are now liable in the early part of the year, but with the prospect of as much traffic as they can cater for the position has changed completely, and manufacturers of new vehicles have been making desperate efforts to complete as many as possible in order that they may be available for the holiday season.

The owner of the motor coach is not only arranging

a full programme for Whitsuntide. Plans have already been prepared for an extensive summer service which will probably come into operation on June 1. For the holidays, the London & Coastal Motor Coach Service, which is typical of the majority of the services from London, will run passengers daily to Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings and Margate, while two-day excursions will be run to Bournemouth.

For Whitsuntide, Messrs. Thos. Cook and Son have arranged a five-day motor coach tour to Devon, starting on Friday next at an inclusive fare providing travel, first class hotel accommodation, meals *en route*, and gratuities.

To show that this is not wholly London-orientated, we visit Edinburgh in a separate article on “Dating charas” later in this *Newsletter*; but let us turn first to Whitby to look at a few Spring and Summer 1921 issues of the *Whitby Gazette* :

22 April 1921:

THE CHARABANC SERVICE BETWEEN WHITBY AND SLEIGHTS

The enterprise of Messrs. Lawson Brothers in providing a regular service of charabancs between Whitby and Sleights is being much appreciated during the busy season; and those who expressed the opinion that when the regular railway service was resumed there would be a falling off of the number of passengers, are now ready to admit that the popularity of the motor trip to Sleights and back is undiminished. In order to provide a covered vehicle, Messrs Lawson have had constructed on a Ford chassis an omnibus body, with upholstered seats facing each other.....

29 April 1921

During the curtailment of the train service, Mr C Howard’s charabanc, “Queen of the Moors”, is bringing the Whitby workmen employed at Skinningrove Iron Works home on Saturday noon and taking them back early on Monday morning.

6 May 1921

THE LOCAL TRAIN SERVICE – DRASTIC CURTAILMENT

In consequence of the coal shortage consequent upon the miners’ dispute, the North Eastern Railway have further reduced the train service and commencing yesterday (Thursday) the only trains from Whitby and West Cliff stations are as follows:

On the North Yorkshire & Cleveland branch, leaving Whitby 7.00 a.m. and 5.32 p.m..

On the Coast line leaving West Cliff for Scarborough at 8.35 a.m. and Whitby for Scarborough at 5.35 p.m.; and to Saltburn from Whitby at 9.12 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. On the Whitby and Malton branch trains will leave Whitby for Malton at 7.15 a.m., 12.10 p.m and 6.15 p.m.

3 June 1921

**MOTOR SERVICE BETWEEN
SLEIGHTS AND WHITBY**

During the period when the train service has been suspended during the daytime, on account of the shortage of coal, consequent upon the miners' dispute, Messrs I.W. and G.T. Lawson's motor service between Sleights and Whitby has been a great boon to residents. The enterprise has proved particularly timely, and not only business men but residents and visitors to both places have found it a convenient and pleasant means of transit. Run frequently and according to a fixed time-table, there is everything to commend the service – and the charge made is very reasonable. Messrs. Lawson in view of the fall in the price of petrol, have made a concession to the public in the form of a return fare of one shilling and sixpence, provided the two journeys are made in one day. The single fare remains at one shilling from Sleights to Whitby, with a graduated charge for Ruswarp and the Carrs boathouse. The fact that the service has to be duplicated on certain days of the week is eloquent testimony to the success of the innovation and Messrs. Lawson are to be complimented upon their enterprise.

As an aside from the main theme of these notes, there is some social history to be detected in these extracts. Firstly, note the ironworkers, who presumably had to lodge at Skinningrove from Monday to Friday nights each week. Then, the usefulness of the Lawsons' bus service to 'business men', is cited in priority to its convenience to residents and visitors. If one interprets 'business man' as meaning 'commercial traveller', it emphasises the importance of those gentlemen both to the railways as passengers and to a fairly remote town like Whitby, as all the year round visitors to its 'commercial' hotels. The astute commercial traveller will not have been slow to appreciate the new bus service, since Ruswarp and

Sleights will, in those days, have had shops, pubs and other establishments worth his while to call upon.

Moreover, the bus will have taken him and his suitcases right to them; the railway station would have been half a mile away – which takes us back to the opening quote from John Hibbs: "Railway managers – like bus managers later – failed to realise that they were in the competitive business of moving people". Well, perhaps the pioneer bus concerns were conscious of their potential. The Lawsons' business became the Pioneer 'Bus Service Co Ltd. It was sold in 1928 to United Automobile Services Ltd, but G T Lawson retained a haulage and taxi business.

And finally, after Whitby, a brief but topical glance at another seaside resort, this time soon after the miners' strike had ended:

Extract from the "Whitstable Scene" website for 1921:

August 2nd. Following two of the most memorable summer months ever known thousands of Britons have packed excursion coaches and trains breaking all records on the fiftieth anniversary of the first Bank Holiday. The approaches to the Isle of Thanet yesterday were jammed by charabancs, and trains were arriving at Margate at ten minute intervals. The summer of 1921 will always be remembered thanks to a ridge of high pressure from the Azores, which refuses to budge.

To finally summarise these notes. Each of the strikes – 1919 and 1921 – clearly gave a boost to road transport? Is it acceptable to say that 1919 boosted road haulage, 1921 the motor bus and charabanc? Has any reader strong evidence to disturb this assessment?

Particular thanks are due to Mrs Sylvia Hutchinson of Whitby Heritage Archive Centre for resourceful research undertaken.

Letters to The Times

Ken Swallow draws attention to a letter in the "The Times" of 6 September 2006

Your headline (Aug 3) "Motorways get extra lane — on the cheap" reminds me of a similar attempt by the Mexican government to increase the capacity of an over-crowded four-lane highway. It repainted the lines so that it had six.

After a year in which accidents increased, it reverted to the original four-lane format, but the authorities claimed that having increased capacity by 50%, only to reduce by 33%, the capacity overall had been increased by 17%. I await our Government's announcement in due course.

Bob Smith, Braintree, Essex

John Hibbs draws attention to a letter in the issue of 10 March 2007


As the Under Sheriff of Gloucestershire makes clear

(letter March 8), High Court enforcement can be remarkably effective.

My father used to recall with great satisfaction a case in which he had been involved before the war. His client had claimed judgment in the High Court against the London tram undertaking after an accident. The cheque was slow in forthcoming. To hurry it on its way an enterprising sheriff's officer made his way to the nearest tram stop on the Embankment at the height of the morning rush hour and boarded the first available tram. Tapping the driver on the shoulder, he produced his writ and announced that the sheriff was in possession of the tram and it wasn't going any further – with predictable consequences for all tram traffic in that part of Central London. The claimant's solicitors had their cheque within the hour.

Tony Lawton, Skelton, York

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40 Years of "Painting the Midlands Red"

Reminiscences of the Early Days

by O C Power

*Traffic Manager, Birmingham and Midland Motor Omnibus Co Ltd (The Midland "Red")
 as told to L D KITCHIN in an interview*

Like many a boy of today, my ambition at the age of eight was to become a bus conductor. I wanted to punch the tickets and carry the satchel, never dreaming that I should, one day, be operating the very service on which I used to ride to school. But I very nearly became a journalist instead.

My first job was on the staff of the United States Consulate at Birmingham, later becoming private secretary to the Consul, the Hon George F Parker, a man of literary attainments who had been editor of the *New York World* and other publications. He thought I had a flair for journalism, and promised to take me back with him to the USA to become a journalist, but when the British Electric Traction Company acquired the assets of the former Birmingham General Omnibus Company from the receiver for the debenture holders, Mr Emile Garcke offered me the position of local secretary. This was September 27, 1899. I accepted the job, and here I have been ever since.

The first manager of the newly acquired Birmingham undertaking was Mr Richard R Fairbairn, who was also manager of the Worcester Tramways, and is now a Worcester alderman and magistrate. At the end of 1901 Mr Fairbairn returned to Worcester, and I became manager of the business at what now seems the early age of 22.

Some idea of the size of the undertaking at that time can be gained from the assets taken over – 12 stables, about 500 horses and 100 miscellaneous horse vehicles. The revenue was in the region of £50,000 a year. Now the Midland "Red" owns about 1,400 buses and coaches, and its annual revenue is over £2,500,000. The annual mileage is 50 millions, and the number of passengers about 250

millions, while the area covered by stage carriage services is over 12,000 square miles.

Incidentally, this is the third war during which I have handled transport. The Boer War broke out on October 11, 1899, a few days after I started with the BET, and I well remember May 17, 1900 – the relief of Mafeking. Everybody in Birmingham went mad. We kept the buses running all night, and, just for the sake of making a noise, people banged the enamelled iron advertisements on the buses with sticks, spoiling the enamel in the process! Four or five of the vehicles – they were, of course, double-deck horse buses – had the staircases ripped off, leaving the upper-deck passengers stranded. We had just received delivery of some brand new omnibuses from Birch Bros, of London, and several of these were badly damaged.

By 1902 the BET had obtained control of all the Black Country Steam and Electric Tramways, and also the City of Birmingham Tramways Company Ltd, which, in addition to running steam trams all over the city, ran cable trams to Handsworth, horse trams to Nechells, accumulator electric trams along Bristol Road, and horse buses on several other routes. The BET was standardising on the overhead electric system throughout the Black Country with a view to operating through services in all directions, and I have vivid recollections of November 18, 1904, the day of changing from steam to overhead electric trams on the service from the city through Smethwick and Oldbury to Dudley. Everything went well until the evening of that day, when a very heavy snowfall occurred. All the nice new electric tramcars were stranded at various points along the road, and the whole of the night was spent pulling them back to the depot with the old steam engines. For several days the steam trams had to come out again, much to the disappointment of the staff and passengers. This is the route, by the way, which has just [in 1939] been converted to motor bus operation by the Midland "Red" and Birmingham Corporation jointly.

*The illustration is of a BMMO letterhead of 1944
 on reduced size notepaper of inferior wartime quality*

Eventful years

The years 1902-1903 covered a period of developments which were to have a decisive effect on the future of transport in Birmingham, for it was then that the Corporation Tramways Committee, after reporting to the Council in favour of accepting the BET Company's offer of £33,500 a year, plus a percentage of gross receipts, for a new twenty-one years lease of the various tramways, changed its mind and, by the casting vote of the Chairman, Alderman C G Beale, decided in favour of municipalising the tram services. For many weeks the BET published a daily paper advocating its scheme to the public, the main object being to electrify the local tramways and link them up with the BET system elsewhere. In 1903 the Birmingham-Aston route was taken over by the Corporation, and Mr Alfred Baker was appointed general manager, a position now occupied by his son, Mr A C Baker.

The horse bus services of the General Omnibus and City Tramways undertakings were merged in the Birmingham and Midland Motor Omnibus, which was formed in November, 1904. We used to take a great pride in our fine fleet of four-in-hand coaches in those days. The drivers had their own horses allotted to them, and May Day used to be a big day, prizes being given to the best studs of horses. I have spent many a frosty evening helping to pick up horses which had fallen down on the treacherous wood and granite sett paving in the city streets. At one time we had well over 1,000 horses, and some of them showed wonderful intelligence in going about their routine jobs, especially in finding their own stalls, sometimes in an upstairs stable.

A four-horse team used to cover about 18 miles a day before being changed over, a three-horse team about 15 miles, with about 12 miles for a pair. This was all arranged on a regular basis, with one complete day's rest per week, but the duty schedules and change-overs were hardly so complicated as those we have today. The average speed per hour was about 6 miles, compared with 10 to 11 miles an hour for motor omnibuses. Drivers used to earn 30s per week, conductors 24s and horse-keepers 21s, their hours averaging about 10 per day.

In 1906, when there was a shortage of hay in England and Canada, I went over to the south of Ireland and purchased a shipload of hay, which I consigned to Avonmouth, and had it trucked to Birmingham by the Midland Railway company. While the trucks were waiting to be unloaded at a Birmingham station the hay caught fire and was all destroyed. We claimed from the railway company on the grounds that the hay caught fire from sparks from shunting engines. They said the fire was caused by internal combustion, and as this view was upheld in court I did not get any hay after all.

First motor buses

Motor vehicles for public passenger transport were first run in Birmingham by the Birmingham Motor Express Company, who, early in 1904, operated for a few months on the Hagley Road route in competition with our horse buses. They had Milnes-Daimlers, with rack and pinion drive; Napiers, Durkopp (German), Wolseleys,

Thornycrofts and Brush vehicles, all of different sizes, shapes and horse-power. These machines, new and untried, were more often in dock than on the road, and in a misguided moment we bought the company out. For about three years we tried to surmount the mechanical difficulties of operating these motor omnibuses, but at last, in 1907, we gave up the struggle, disposed of all the vehicles, and went back entirely to horses.

The present day "all metal" bus is not so recent in conception as some people might imagine. We ran one by arrangement with the Daimler company, who built the vehicle in 1911. It was a 34-seater, and it had two petrol motors, which, in addition to propelling the vehicle, were coupled up to an electrical attachment which charged batteries as the bus ran down hill. The current thus stored was made available for assisting the petrol motors when running uphill. We only ran it for about a month, as the Daimler company took it away and did not return it to us.

We started running motor buses again in 1912, the first being 30hp Tilling-Stevens petrol-electric double-deckers. The Tennant Street and Bearwood stables were partly converted into garages. Ultimately, Bearwood became our headquarters, and has remained so ever since.

It was the introduction of the motor bus which made possible our plans for linking up all the neighbouring towns and villages, and a start was made by introducing a service to Walsall in December, 1913. In the same year the Corporation started a bus service to Rednal, using Daimlers. Then, in 1914, the present non-competitive agreement was entered into, and the Corporation took over all services inside the city boundary, purchasing from us our Tennant Street garage and thirty Tilling-Stevens omnibuses. The company agreed to charge protective fares on their services which ran into the city, and the Corporation agreed not to compete with the company outside their boundaries, and this working arrangement is, of course, still maintained.

I had an idea that we could develop motor omnibus services between Birmingham and towns within about a 30-mile radius, but I never imagined we should develop longer distances in the way we have done. The war of 1914 to 1918 curtailed our developments, and even our regular services. Many of our horses were taken by the military authorities, and for the first three or four months I was kept busy purchasing horses and equipment for the Government.

My liking for holidaying abroad before the Great War used to take the form of touring the Continent, and the end of July, 1914, found me in Germany, but by making a long, non-stop dash from Mainz to Ostend I got away in time. The present war also caught me on holiday. I left for a Mediterranean cruise on August 19 last, but when nearing Algiers we changed our course for the Bermudas instead. We had hardly got as far as the Azores, however, when there was a further change – this time to Tilbury. As all my friends know, I am very fond of cruising, and hope to add many more to my present total of fifty-six trips through the Bay of Biscay.

After the last war, we started in real earnest to open up

the country around us. As I have often expressed it, we were "painting the Midlands red" to the advantage of the community as well as the company. I recollect two events which made a big impression at the time. The first was in 1919, when, as a result of the railway strike, we ran services from Birmingham to London, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Derby, and other important centres. Then there was Sunday, May 22, 1921, during the coal strike, when the city tram services all stopped running, and we worked services on all the main routes by permission of the Watch Committee.

What of the future of the long-distance services? Well, I think most of the existing long-distance road facilities will remain. For several years we have all been cultivating intermediate traffic on our longer routes. People living some distance away from the big towns find it a great convenience to be able to join our through services at intermediate points which they can readily reach by local services. Although through traffic may, possibly, diminish a little in the course of time, there is no doubt that intermediate traffic will go on developing as people realise the convenience offered as well as the saving in time and expense. In addition, we are encouraging people to get about who never travelled before.

Seaside traffic is, of course, in a different category. There is little doubt that this will remain with us for ever and go on increasing as more people get holidays with pay. A large section of the public like and prefer to travel by road. They have two extra days of their holiday in the countryside travelling to and from their destination, and the journeys to the coast by coach are full of interest.

A lot of people, when finishing their holidays in August, get out of our coaches and at once put their names down on a provisional booking list for the following year so as to be sure of their seats. This is actually quite a common practice.

So I have not changed my mind after forty years in the bus business. I still think it has an even greater future. Looking back, it has all been very interesting and very enjoyable. I have enjoyed every hour I have been on the job, and hope to go on for another fifteen or twenty years at least. My hobbies in my school days were rugger, boxing, and swimming. The first I kept up until I was nearly 30; I was boxing up to 40; and I still have a swim when the opportunity offers, although I am now 60. I have innumerable friends, and I'm happy and love my work.

It is, however, very nice to remember the old days when I knew all my men by their Christian names and when I used to spend every Sunday on horseback riding round the stables, which were situated all over the city – a 25-mile circular tour. Still, progress cannot be stopped, and I am as keen as ever on keeping the Midland "Red" flag flying all over the Midlands.

I have one very great satisfaction in the fact that I have in the Midland "Red" traffic department a staff of most loyal assistants, many of them trusty old veterans reared in passenger transport, who have worked with me in a happy, friendly manner for many, many years, and to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

Reproduced from *Bus & Coach*, November 1939

J. Lyons & Co. Ltd., Cadby Hall, 1952

ROY LARKIN

It has long been regarded that drivers working in the low-account sector have had an easier life than those in the haulage sector. A recent 'find' of a staff book, outlining the rules and benefits available to transport staff at J. Lyons & Co at Cadby Hall, Kensington in 1952 provides an insight into working conditions for a large low-account operator, albeit one that seems to have been more forward thinking than most.

The booklet outlines benefits available to all Lyons' employees and sets out Company rules particular to drivers.

The normal working week was 44 hours. Anybody ordered into work and reporting for duty was paid a minimum 8 hour shift from Monday to Friday with 4 hour minimum for Saturday. Employees were required to work overtime when necessary, including Saturday afternoons and Sundays. A minimum 5.5 hours was paid for Sunday. An additional 6d per hour was paid for hours worked between 9.00pm and 6.00am.

Wages, including overtime and journey money, were paid the Friday of the following week. Overtime was paid for all hours worked over 8 hours from Monday to Friday and over 4 hours on Saturday with all hours after 12.30pm on Saturday paid as overtime. For the first 6 hours

overtime worked per week, the rate was time and a quarter with subsequent hours at time and a half. All hours on Sunday were paid at double time. Wages were calculated by different methods for the 'Heavy Transport' and 'Light Transport' divisions.

For 'Heavy Transport' a bonus, known as 'journey money' was paid in place of overtime. This was calculated on the number and type of loads carried. The resultant 'base rate plus journey money' ensured no driver received less than the 'base rate plus overtime' wages and provided opportunity to earn more. Heavy transport was regarded as the heaviest lorries working the trunk routes throughout the country.

'Light Transport' was smaller vehicles used for local deliveries. Drivers were expected to drive any type of vehicle in the fleet with the base rate calculated to reflect the variety of the fleet's make-up. An additional bonus was paid for punctuality and efficient performance of carrying out duties. One third of each week's bonus was deducted for each day of avoidable absenteeism.

Any driver reporting more than 15 minutes late for work was deemed absent and not required for work that day. He would then be required to telephone his manager later that day for the following day's start time before 12.00 noon. Any driver not phoning before 12.00 was

deemed absent for the following day.

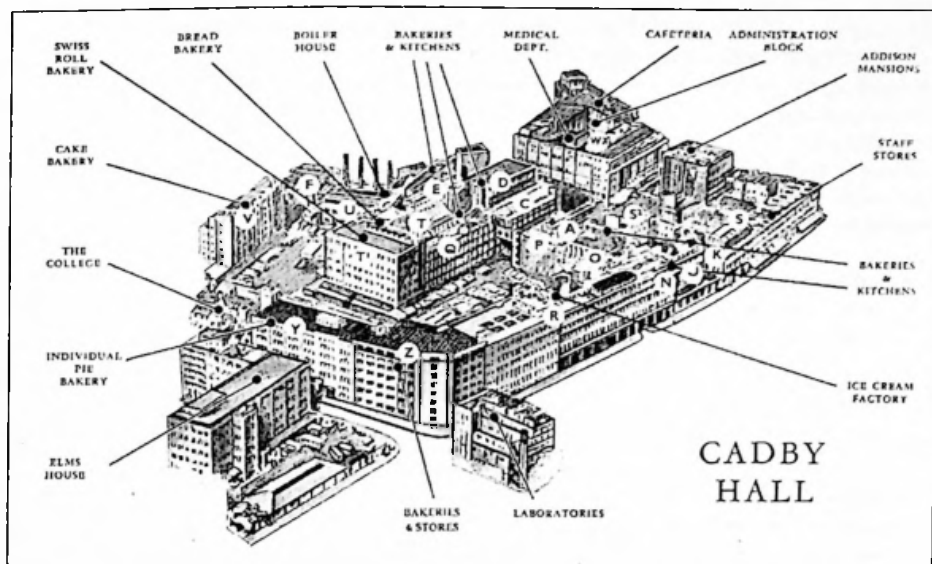
Any employee receiving an injury, however slight, had to report to the Medical Department immediately and an accident form had to be completed.

The above rules pertained specifically to Lyons transport staff, although further rules related to all Lyons employees in general. Bicycles were not to be ridden in the yard; collections among staff; buying or selling goods,

loan clubs, gambling, intoxicating liquor were forbidden and the wearing of the company uniform was compulsory. Employees were required to 'restrain their language and conduct themselves decently.'

The Welfare and Personnel Department was experienced in advising employees with personal or domestic problems as well as those arising from their employment. Home visits were arranged to employees on sick leave to see if anything could be done by the Company to aid recovery.

Arrangements existed with convalescent homes in the country and at the seaside to



Plan of Cadby Hall
(from Cadby Hall Transport
Staff employees' book, 1952)

All vehicle accidents, whether at Cadby Hall or on the road had to be reported and in the case of a serious accident, immediately by phone for instructions. Breakdowns likely to cause delay had to be reported immediately. It was the driver's responsibility to ensure his vehicle's roadworthiness before taking it onto a public road.

Heavy Transport vehicle defects had to be reported in the Heavy Transport book, available in the office and Light Transport defects were reported on the back of the waybill.

Drivers were reminded that their behaviour before the public would reflect on the company and that arguing with customers or Shops Staff was forbidden.

Smoking was forbidden within the grounds of Cadby Hall, except in designated areas. Smoking was permitted outside the factory, though was expressly forbidden where it would create an unfavourable impression with the public. Spitting was expressly forbidden.

Within the Transport Department, there existed the Transport Progress Committee, consisting of elected representatives of the men and selected representatives from management. This committee met once a month to discuss any departmental problems, internally and with other Lyons departments or customers. Each member of staff also had the right to see their Director.



Scammell Highwayman plus assorted trailers and vehicles inside Cadby Hall. (Roy Larkin Collection)

where employees could be sent on the recommendation of the Company's Medical Officer.

A choice of Hospital Contributory Schemes existed, the Hospital Saturday Fund, for example, costing 4d per week, deducted from wages. These schemes provided additional benefits to the statutory amount payable, entitling the employee to a grant if needing to attend hospital or convalescent home in addition to their National Insurance Benefit.

The Medical Department promoted the health of employees through advice and education in matters of personal and general hygiene. The health of employees

was supervised through liaison with the employee's own doctor regarding special needs, such as diet. The Medical Officer could arrange for special diets to be available in the mess rooms.

A variety of physiotherapy was available including massage, artificial sunlight and electrical or heat treatment. A dental surgeon attended Cadby Hall 5 days a week with examination and treatment carried out to National Health Service regulations. An ophthalmic surgeon was available, providing a certificate was obtained from the employee's own doctor confirming the need for eye treatment. A qualified chiropodist was available, although this service was charged at 1s 3d for one foot or 1s 9d for both feet.

Welfare loans, a provident fund, life insurance, income tax advice and a National Savings scheme where 6d per week was deducted from wages and credited to a Post Office Savings Bank account in the employee's name were available.

Fixed holidays, (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday and the first Monday in August) were regarded as customary holidays and paid at normal hours. Staff required to work, were paid double time for these days with 5.5 hours minimum. Staff who were absent for the day either side of the fixed holiday were not paid for the holiday unless a medical certificate was produced or leave of absence agreed with their manager. Staff required to work, but absent on fixed holidays, were not paid.

Annual Holiday was additional to fixed holidays. Staff with less than 12 months service received 1 day for each month of service prior to April 15th. Staff with 1 year's continuous service received 2 weeks and staff with over 20 years service received 3 weeks.

The Lyons' Club provided recreational facilities and

was open to all employees. The main club grounds were at Sudbury and railway tickets to Sudbury were available at reduced cost. The grounds of nearly 100 acres provided facilities for soccer, rugby, hockey, bowls, netball, tennis, badminton, a rifle range and a swimming pool.

The sports pavilion included a restaurant and combined theatre/dance hall.

The clubhouse provided comfortable lounges, three full sized snooker tables, table tennis and darts with a licensed bar serving light meals.

A further club facility at Cadby Hall provided facilities for playing bridge, chess, darts, a stamp circle, amateur dramatics, table tennis, four full sized snooker tables and a lending library with a comfortable lounge with light refreshments.

A rowing club had its boathouse at Linden House, Hammersmith, where an indoor tank for novice rowers and indoor shooting range was available in winter.

Other sections provided outside events for angling, ice skating, harriers, boxing, squash, fencing, model engineering and handicrafts.

Membership was open to all male employees to the 153rd (Lyons) Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

Readers are reminded also of the article in *Chairman's Bulletin** "Lyons' Cakes Van Boy 1956-1960" with three-page follow-up in *Newsletter* 38.

* stocks of *Chairman's Bulletin* now exhausted. *Newsletter* 38 (and other back issues to No.37) still available from Roger Atkinson, 45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU, each @ £2.50 post-free. See Editorial this month regarding a file giving abbreviated list of contents of each *Newsletter*.

Association Matters

◆ NEW MEMBERS

Graham Westcott of Southampton
T.R. Axten of Bridestowe
Wynne Jones of Leighton Buzzard
Simon Blainey of Oxford
Cliff Hathaway of Witney
Jim Staley of Henley-on-Thames
Transport Association (rejoined corporate member)
Michael Pye of Radstock
Robin Pearson of Nynehead

Congratulations to corporate member *Coventry Transport Museum* now accredited by the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Awarded by the MLA – the Government Department responsible for overseeing all museums, libraries and archives in the country – the Accredited Museum standard is an updated and much more demanding version of the former Registered Museum standard which it replaces. Accreditation confirms that museums achieve the highest quality standards in all aspects of their work including the management of their collections; customer care standards; equality of access for all; lifelong learning programmes; the imaginative and informative interpretation of their

exhibits; the financial stability of the organisation and a cohesive and dynamic approach to community and social development.

Following the Annual General Meeting at Coventry Transport Museum on 24th March, there were five presentations made to the subsequent Members' Meeting:

Dave Bubier opened the proceedings with a presentation entitled *Road Tomes* on some written sources of road history from the past. He described how his interest in the history of roads had come about through research into the transitional period between the horse-drawn and early motor eras, roughly 1885-1914, initially concentrating on the operational aspects of passenger transport. The last decade of the 19th Century is of particular interest in this context; the railway system by then largely complete, had consolidated its impact on passenger corridors and flows. Much work is still to be done on what comprised the residual road transport network and whether it formed the embryo motor bus network. Aspects of his research began to cross-over into goods carriage, especially as regards "carriers", an understudied sector and one where too many myths have

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**NEWSLETTER No.51**

- The target date for issue of No. 51 is
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Contributions by
7 August please

- Provisional target date for No. 52 is
6 December 2007

Contributions by
6 November

- The 2007 subscription covers Nos.49 to 52



surrounded the horse drawn era. Once the traditional common carrier converted to motor, there is a distinct lack of research and few personal accounts. Dave is engaged in a localised study of those serving Canterbury in the period between the wars, one of whom was still extant into the 1960s.

As a generalist historian, Dave has always had a passing interest in transport issues of earlier (pre-motor) times and this has been enhanced by the impressive work of Dorian Gerhold in throwing so much new light on early road transport. However, it was his parallel interest in the work of Sir Henry Maybury (*Newsletter* 48) that had Dave seeking relevant sources. The Romans gave us roads, but they all but ceased to exist through the Anglo-Saxon and medieval period, the 16th and 17th century traveller endured dust, potholes and quagmires; there came Turnpikes and Telford's roads, railways ousted the stagecoach and then we inexplicably inherited a road network for the 'horseless carriage'. Obviously there was rather more to it than that, but that simplistic viewpoint has received a great deal of credence.

Of particular interest was how the upkeep of roads has evolved and this is the focus of his current research. Only the most fragmentary accounts have addressed the topic in recent years, so he found it necessary to start looking for earlier work, and over the past six months, this has become quite an absorbing study in itself. It started when the Maybury research relating to the Road Board of 1909-1919 threw up references to a book by William Rees-Jeffreys published in 1949, *The King's Highway*. Cited as an historical and biographical record of the past sixty years, it proved invaluable although Rees-Jeffreys had a few axes to grind and needs to be treated with caution.

Most general and specialist booksellers now pass their catalogues onto such online agents as Amazon and Abe Books, both having worldwide connections. You can pay through them with confidence, subject to the usual precautions. Dave has accounts with both and has had nothing but exemplary dealing with them. He started a list of potentially useful road history books by scouring the bibliographies contained in those already in his collection. To run

through a few that have been found:

The King's Highway by William Rees-Jeffreys, Batchworth Press, 1949 considered a key text. Available in the range £8-£15.

The Story of the King's Highway by Sidney & Beatrice Webb. 'Their Local Government' series, 1913. Deals with political changes at the end of 19th Century and road maintenance.

The Road Goes On by C.W. Scott-Giles, a professional surveyor published by the Epworth Press in 1946.

The Roads of England by R.M.C. Anderson published by Benn in 1932. Content appears to be lightweight.

Stage Coach and Mail in days of yore by C.G. Harper, thought to be a professional journalist, published by Chapman & Hall in 1903. Two volumes, lavishly illustrated and the 'holy grail' for anyone with an interest in stage coaches.

A Treatise on Roads by Sir Henry Parnell published by Longmans, 1833 and 1838. A very important early work but expect to pay upwards of £265.

Early Carriages & Roads by Sir Walter Glibbey, an expert on Shire horses, published by Vinton & Co. in 1903.

The Green Roads of England by R. Hippisley-Cox published by Methuen in 1914. Often cited in bibliographies but unable to find a copy on the market.

Humphrey Clinker, an 18th Century novel by Tobias Smollett that contains extensive descriptions of period journeys.

The Road by Hilare Belloc, published by Hobson, Manchester in 1923. Belloc was a well-known and prolific essayist who was commissioned for this work and applied his usual diligence to the subject. (Not to be confused with the author's earlier book *The Old Road*.)

In the published literature of the past may be found a comprehensive source of information on the history of the roads themselves. Outside of the British Library, he doubts whether all of these are to be found in any one specialist library or archive. Dave concluded by asking whether the Association needs to have a long-term objective of encouraging the creation of an archive specialising in road history material.

The next presentation was from Tony Francis, Secretary of our corporate member *The Omnibus Society*. He started by outlined his own involvement with the Society, having joined in 1963, served on its Council for many years and more recently taken on

the rôle of Secretary. Professionally, he was part of the Department for Transport in London and had worked in recent years on the link between buses and trains, normally because of engineering work. The Society's remit was British Bus and Coach Services, working in parallel with sister organisations *The PSV Circle* and *Buses Worldwide* (both corporate members of the Roads and Road Transport History Association), that specialised in the vehicles and operations overseas respectively.

Founded in 1929, the OS faced an ever-changing and increasingly complex world. It had a unique collection of archive material, including a collection of bus and coach timetables, in two locations. The OS has appointed a President each year from the industry since 1947 and is recognised within the industry as making a serious study of bus and coach operations. Organised around a federal system of branches, its main archive was located at Ironbridge with its photographic library kept elsewhere.

Tony wondered whether there was a scope for backroom services between different societies to be amalgamated for greater efficiency while retaining the unique selling point of each. He felt that in common areas there was a need to co-operate more and to work more closely together.

After lunch, we welcomed Peter Housego, Global Archive Manager of the BP Archive, a newly joined corporate member. He is Team Leader for the BP Archive operation based at the University of Warwick, in Coventry. In 1901, William Knox D'Arcy negotiated a concession for the exploration of oil in Persia via the First Exploitation Company Ltd. By 1903, he had run out of money and through various machinations, the Burmah Oil Company was encouraged to invest in his enterprise. In 1908, money was again short but work continued drilling at a site known as Masjid-i-Suleiman and on 26th May that year, oil was struck with a fountain of oil 25 metres high. The following April, shares were issued in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Ltd (APOC) and it developed a major engineering enterprise to build pipelines from Masjid-i-Suleiman to a site for a refinery at Abadan. The British Government was interested in securing oil supplies with two contracts, one a majority shareholding in APOC and the other the Admiralty Oil Supply Contract.

The British Petroleum Company was formed in 1906 as a subsidiary of the German-owned Europäische Petroleum Union and it acquired an exclusive right to sell Shell motor spirit in the U.K. with 36% of the petrol market. In 1914, it was classified as an enemy concern and its assets were seized. It was bought in 1917 by APOC as a distribution and sales organisation for Britain. It grew from 69 pumps in May 1921 to over six thousand just four years later, having 20½% of the U.K. trade. The following decade saw exploration successes in Iraq (Kirkuk Field), a link with Shell to form Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd, the development of terminals, depots and service stations, as well as the creation of fleets of road and rail tankers and air refuellers, and ground-breaking advertising campaigns.

The war saw much involvement supporting the war effort with major sea tanker losses and damage to U.K. installations, the start of U.K. production at Eakring in

Nottinghamshire and the development of specialist fuels, such as for aviation. In 1951, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's assets in Iran were nationalised but by 1954, negotiation allowed the company to return to Iran as part of a joint venture of major oil companies. The company was renamed the British Petroleum Co. Ltd. and the search of oil elsewhere, for example Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Abu Dhabi, Oman and Dubai, began. The sixties and seventies saw major oil discoveries by B.P. in the North Sea and Alaska and this resulted in major technological advances to extract and transport the fuel. Various changes in ownership took place in the 1980s including the Government's sale of the remaining shares in B.P. in 1987, but by the early 1990s, B.P. was in financial trouble. This led to more mergers (with Amoco in 1998) and acquisitions (Arco and Burmah Castrol in 2000 and Veba Aral in 2002).

The first reference to an archive in APOC is in 1921 and the first professional archivist was employed in 1966 and based in Islington. In 1991, a Board decision was made to grant third party access to historical records and through a tender process the University of Warwick site was selected. An investment of £1½m was made by B.P. in building the BP Archive, Modern Records Centre and University Library extensions and in 1993, the BP Archive opened to researchers. In 2000, the Burmah Oil Company Archive was added to the collection, as was the Castrol Archive three years later. Over thirteen kilometres of records, paper, photographs, films and artefacts are now held in the archive. The archive holds the complete B.P. Photographic Library as well as the Shell-Mex and B.P. photographic and advertising material. Visits to the archive are by prior appointment, either e-mail at BPArchive@bp.com or by telephoning 024 765 24522.

The next speaker was Terry Keegan, Secretary of the Milestone Society. He gave us a fascinating talk on the history of milestones and the work of the Society. Milestones first originated in Roman times who built road in Britain to move armies quickly and gave them mile markers with the distance to the next Roman military station. Few survive apart from some in museums. A mile was defined as a thousand paces and each pace was made up of two steps. The Romans were here for five hundred years but in the succeeding thousand years, all the Normans, Saxons, etc. did was to take the milestones away, leaving few in situ.

Up to Elizabethan times, a mile varied from county to county and Kent, for example, even had long miles, short miles and miles. This was standardised in 1593 when 1,760 yards was a mile, except in Ireland where the figure was 2,240. This discrepancy was rectified in 1826 but the difference led to wonderful anomalies in mileages in Ireland. Parishes were made responsible for roads, and residents were supposed to give four days work a year to improve the roads of the parish.

The turnpike era led to the widespread provision of milestones with an Act in 1766 to require roads to be measured by milemarkers as the Postmaster-General paid for his mail transport by distance. As a result, milestones became quite common, and were often shaped like gravestones, principally because they were often carved

by gravestone makers. Initially roman numerals were used but from the mid 18th Century, Arabic numerals were used instead and the stones were angled to the road to make them easier to read in motion. Different designs began to appear, made from oak, stone and towards the end of the 18th Century, cast-iron plates were fitted on stone supports. In the 19th Century, the advent of the railways decimated the turnpike trusts and renewal of milestones largely ceased, but from 1888, the responsibility to maintain them passed to county councils. In 1940, a large number of milestones and other road signage were destroyed for fear that they would aid enemy parachutists, if there were a German invasion.

Terry outlined the aim of the Milestone Society to record milestones on a database, one that has now grown to over 7,000 milestones. It aims to preserve part of our roadside heritage and believed it was winning the battle, with the Highways Agency now becoming interested in their preservation. He rounded off his talk with a selection of slides showing different types of milestones still in existence in the British Isles.

Our last speaker was our member **Dr. Charles Roberts**, speaking to us about the Online Transport Archive. The 2001 Colloquium of the Roads & Road Transport Association was devoted to the disposal of personal collections. The May 2005 edition of *The Railway Magazine* was another forum that considered the same issue under the dramatic headline "Do you want THIS to happen to your collection?" accompanied by a rather graphic picture of slides being emptied into a rubbish bin. Online Transport Archive (OTA) is just one example of what can be achieved when a determined, committed group of transport enthusiasts decide to take action in order to prevent irreplaceable material being totally lost for the future or passing into the hands of those interested purely in exploiting collections for personal gain.

OTA has its origins in the Online Video (OV) series of videotapes, and later DVDs, produced by Wilf Watters and Martin Jenkins. For some 20 years, OV produced over 130 tapes covering a wide variety of transport subjects. Owing to a generous discount scheme, over £140,000 was also raised for the transport preservation movement. The footage included in each release was obtained through the loan of original film from film makers both in the UK and from overseas. As OV's reputation increased, several film makers asked if OV would consider storing and taking responsibility for their original archive footage.

Eventually, it was decided, for legal reasons, that a totally separate business entity should be created to administer these growing collections. Online Video Archives Limited (as it was originally known) was thus established in 2000, a formally constituted limited company, with all the obligations that go with that status. Long-term security was ensured by obtaining charitable status in January 2004 and the name was changed to Online Transport Archive (OTA). Since then, OTA has continued to grow. It has clearly printed aims and objectives and holds significant collections with many others covered by wills. OTA now rents space from Ian Allan Publishing where sorting and cataloguing take place.

Back in the formative days, two issues had quickly come to the fore. Firstly, there needed to be guaranteed long-term security. As things initially stood, the films would be administered by the Archive for the lifetime of the film maker, but would thereafter face an uncertain future. As a result, film makers were strongly advised to make specific provision in their wills to ensure that the Archive received their film in the event of their death. If they were unwilling to do that, then a signed form would at least provide some indication to executors to contact OTA when the inevitable happened, although we stress that this is not legally binding. OTA undertakes to ensure that each collection is retained as a discreet entity to perpetuate the name of its creator. Undertakings are given to ensure every reasonable effort is made to have the originator's name appearing in any film or photo credit. OTA also have a limited number of agreements whereby a proportion of any revenue raised (up to a maximum of 50%) is passed to a film maker's estate for up to 10 years after the death of the photographer. This has proved most helpful to a number of families.

Charles said that this was an opportune moment to recount what could happen when someone had no will, or failed to make provision in it. A well-known transport enthusiast who died recently had been verbally most supportive of OTA, but had neither made a will nor left any written instructions. OTA only found out about his death through a third party, by which time the local council (from whom he rented a flat) were about to instigate a house clearance. After frantic negotiations, the council accepted that OTA was a *bona fide* UK Charity and as a result, OTA was allowed access to the premises to remove all the endangered material into storage. But things can take unexpected turns. Shortly before Christmas 2006, OTA received a letter from the council's solicitor telling them of the existence of a half-sister whom it is understood the deceased had never met. She is, of course, now the sole beneficiary of his estate, including his transport collection. Negotiations continue, but OTA remains unclear as to the outcome of this irreplaceable material.

The second early preoccupation concerned the question of what should OTA conserve. Film makers rarely limited themselves to the ciné format. Many also had extensive collections of colour slides and negatives. There were often detailed written records to support their image making, not to mention books and general transport ephemera. The decision was taken to expand the scope of the Archive to include original video, slides, negatives, prints, postcards and supporting notes. The underlying objective is to ensure preservation of the original source material, whilst independently creating as much back up material as is practicably possible. In many cases, particularly where the original image may have deteriorated (some 50s/early 60s Agfa, Boots, Gevacolor and Ilford slides are major culprits in this regard), the backup can be restored to something like the former glory of the original using modern technology. Sometimes, to help a family, OTA will take books (to be sold on) and magazines (virtually worthless). In so many instances, the relatives simply want all 'the stuff' removed.

To guarantee long-term continuity, OTA is managed by a

Board of Directors, whose members are also Trustees for Charity Commission purposes. These represent a wide range of transport interests and most importantly cover ages from the early 40s to late 60s. As a non-enthusiast, their present Treasurer provided an excellent balance. Currently, OTA is also carefully identifying suitable Directors in the younger age range. OTA's immediate plans remain focused in three areas. OTA spends many hours trying to ensure collections are not lost. This is achieved by spreading the word about will-writing, and taking action (often immediate) when vulnerable collections are brought to its attention. It has to ensure that it knows what is in its possession and conserve it effectively – collections can vary from the immaculately catalogued to the totally disorganised.

Finally OTA has to fulfil another aim – making the material available, something OTA achieves in a number of ways. Its main source of revenue is derived from publication of slides and photographs in a wide range of transport-related books and magazines. OTA is now becoming a first port of call for an increasing number of authors and publishers; as a result the OTA photo-credit is

appearing under ever more published views. Until it ceased regular production in 2006, Online Video paid OTA a royalty for use of material. Another lucrative source of income comes from TV companies. Soon, OTA will once again be able to supply rare archive footage at affordable prices once the necessary equipment is installed. OTA has moved into PhotoCD production on a small scale. The OTA Directors give regular talks; increasingly this is undertaken in digital form so as to avoid damage to the original material. Co-written by Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts (both OTA Directors), *Streets of Liverpool* (Ian Allan) is due for publication in August 2007, both Directors having donated their fees to OTA.

Much has been achieved but there is still a vast amount to do as we know how many vulnerable collections there are out there many of which, despite all the publicity about wills, are still likely to be lost. It is surprising how reluctant so many enthusiasts are about making simple arrangements to protect their life's work.

Our thanks to all five speakers for their diverse and absorbing presentations.

Conference Papers 2006

The 2006 Conference papers were published at the beginning of March. All those who attended the Conference in Reading last October, plus any who ordered a copy with their 2007 membership renewal, should have received their copy in March. The published booklet is available to other members (and to non-members) at £5.00 post free. Cheques to R&RTHA Ltd; order from Roger Atkinson, 45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU.

The theme of the Conference was "Private or Public". The booklet comprises:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <i>Who should own and/or control public transport?</i> | |
| Professor Stuart Cole | 4 pages |
| <i>The Evolution of Municipal Trading</i> | |
| Dr. Martin Higginson | 11 pages |
| <i>The Nationalisation of Road Freight Transport</i> | |
| <i>Its origins and its legacy</i> - Grahame Boyes | 3 pages |

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <i>The Privatisation of NFC (National Freight Corporation)</i> | |
| Professor John Armstrong | 3 pages |
| <i>Bus Services and Bus Usage since the Transport Act, 1985</i> | |
| [brief outline] Chris Hilditch | 1 page |

This varied collection of papers contains, as was evident at the Conference itself, one or two talks that were controversial. (Yet it has been one of those very talks that has already gained small but enthusiastic sales for the booklet). However, leaving aside the interesting, if contentious – and contrasting – viewpoints in the first and last of the papers, there is one centre-piece that alone makes the booklet well worth its price. Martin Higginson's study of the Evolution of Municipal Trading is a balanced article of serious historical research, which alone makes it well worth the quite modest price.

RA

"Leaving no stone unturned"

This year, instead of an autumn Conference, the Association is arranging a Research Workshop to which a wide range of interested historians, amateur and professional, and not confined to our own membership, will be invited. There will be a Chairman and four (possibly five) speakers. The addresses, all directed at particular aspects of research, will be significantly shorter than at our Conferences and there will be good scope for audience participation as the event progresses. As a concluding item, the Chairman and speakers will form a panel to take questions from the audience.

The Lecture Theatre at Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery has been booked for the event on **Saturday 27 October 2007**. It is hoped that full details will be available within four weeks of the appearance of this *Newsletter*, and they will be circulated to all members. However, please put the date in your diaries now.

Tony Newman

No.50

Newsletter has reached No.50. A brief resumé of its history is appropriate.

We say in our recruitment brochure that the Association was formed in 1992. That is pedantically correct, but the first *Newsletter* was produced in November 1991.

Grahame Boyes was the Editor, and in that first issue he set out the pre-history of the Association, commenting that "students of the road haulage industry and of pre-twentieth century road transport, can be counted on the fingers of one hand". (He might have added "roads" as also being a backwater of historical study).

Grahame Boyes stayed as Editor through to *Newsletter*

No.8 in September 1995. Then Ron Phillips took over for a long spell as Editor, right through to No.35, in November 2003. Since then it has been your present Editor, starting with *Chairman's Bulletin* substituting for *Newsletter* 36, and continuing with 37 onwards.

The support of members and the wide range of contributions from them is heartening. The identification, 16 years ago, of the fields in which it is more difficult to promote items still has some validity, but little by little, the Association and *Newsletter* have tried to foster an interest in a whole breadth of topics, and membership has (gently) risen.

RA

Editorial

Readers have a 24-page *Newsletter* to study, or to delve in. Sometimes it is difficult to remember where, or when, you saw a particular item. Tony Newman wishes to remind members that he can send them by e-mail, on request, a listing of the principal items in each issue, starting with *Newsletter* No.1, and covering at present to No.48. It is emphasised that this is not an Index, it is simply a listing, issue by issue. You have to work your way through it – now quite a lengthy process, but easier than looking *Newsletters* themselves. Tony's e-mail address is toekneenewman@hotmail.com

With this issue we reach No.50. Our earlier issues are not forgotten. The first article in this issue takes up a subject originally raised in *Newsletter* No.2.

A point to direct readers' attention to is the very full and competent report by Chris Hogan of the highly interesting array of 'presentations' that followed our Coventry AGM this year — to be found under "Association Matters".

The book reviews and notices include two books by long-term lorry drivers. In each case the reviewer is someone with close knowledge of the industry and experience of the work and conditions. One reviewer is our member Dave Bubier; the other is David Trindle, not a member, but whom we have met once before in *Newsletter* 39, where he

wrote "Memories of Nationalisation" about his early experiences with British Road Services. The publisher of "Where do you want this lot?" is Gingerfold Publications (our member Graham Edge), whose letter on book publishing for the transport enthusiast market appeared in *Newsletter* 49.

Working conditions feature strongly in both the above two books. They also are the essence of Roy Larkin's "Cadby Hall" article, on transport workers' terms and conditions at J Lyons & Co Ltd in 1952.

Turning back to book reviews, another to mention is one of a weighty tome that may sound to be the sort of book to be dismissed as "not my field". Richard Storey, as reviewer has brought out the rich values of "Early Motor Vehicle Registration in Wiltshire 1903-1914".

David Grimmett, in his article "Excursion to Buckfast Abbey", alludes the pleasures and channels of local research, in his report of a fascinating, though minor, case before the magistrates.

Elements of social history come into David Grimmett's article and are present in several other articles.

RA

From the Research Co-ordinator's desk

The latest in the list of major archive centres scheduled for closure is The British Library Newspaper Library Collection at Colindale, claimed to be the finest newspaper collection in the world. Over 30,000 people use the collection every year.

But on 1 March 2007 major plans were revealed to move its historic collection. The official statement referred to the fact that newspapers deteriorate quickly due to the poor quality of the paper they are printed on and there

are growing concerns about the fragility of the collection. Fifteen per cent of the collection cannot be used by readers because of its poor condition. A further 19% is at high risk, and will soon have to be withdrawn from use. The British Library, the statement continues, is acting to provide readers better access and to preserve the collection for future generations. Many items they hold do not exist anywhere else.

The newspaper collection will move from Colindale to 'a

new storage facility' (believed to be the existing site at Boston Spa) that will provide improved preservation facilities. Digital and Microfilm access to the collection will be provided at the British Library's St. Pancras site. The move will take place on a phased basis from 2007 to 2011, and will lead to the closure of Colindale by December 2012. The British Library receives a free copy of every issue of UK newspapers and magazines through Legal ('Copyright') Deposit bringing in 13,000 issues every month. Colindale possesses hard copy and microfilmed newspapers amounting to more than 52,000 titles dating back to 1513 - the first news account ever printed in Britain. The facilities at Colindale are reaching maximum levels.

I am trying to discover what proportion of the collection eventually will be available at St. Pancras. This news comes soon after the reports of sharp cuts of 7% being made to the British Library budget, which might lead to the end of free admission for readers.

On our own Website www.rriha.org.uk there is an under-used facility where members who are actively researching road transport historical topics and would welcome help

with their projects may advertise their needs. When I last looked at this site there were only two entries. Why not add your activities to the list? It could lead to contact with someone who has access to just the information you need.

I am grateful to Ken Swallow for drawing my attention to a facility that he enjoys by having a Liverpool City Council Libraries Card. By entering his card number on the Liverpool Reference Library site he can access, on his home computer, the digital archive of *The Times* newspaper. Here it is possible to search for items that appeared in the newspaper columns from 1785-1985. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is also searchable by this means. It seems likely that other city and large town libraries, or even some county libraries may offer similar facilities to their membership. I have just learned that this facility is available via a Kent County Council library card. It would be interesting if our members could make enquiries locally and then let me know of any other successes so that the facilities may be made more widely known.

Tony Newman
April 2007

Letters

◆ CLOSURE OF COLINDALE

Tony Newman refers in his Research Co-ordinator's Report to the intended closure of the Newspaper Library at Colindale. Colindale, albeit a bit like an old-fashioned gentlemen's club, has been the source of much historical research over many years. The particular threat may be to the rarely consulted papers such as those of the cab trade; there will be a temptation simply to store them without microfilming them.

If you want to research in the traditional way, using original documents, the message is 'do it now'

Ian Yearsley

◆ DEFINITIVE HISTORIES

In the March 2007 R&RTHA Newsletter, David Holding, when reviewing what was claimed to be a 'definitive history' of a bus company gave his criteria

for a successful bus history: 'it should deal with the people – proprietors, management and staff; it should do justice to the places and routes; many will demand that it covers the hardware of vehicles and premises; and that it should give attention to ephemera such as timetables, maps, tickets, and publicity'.

In my opinion this misses one crucial topic: the company's finances, including both its financial structure and its profitability. A company is an economic entity, the main purpose of which is to make a profit for its owners. Also, the financial performance influences other aspects of the company such as whether it has an acquisitive or defensive strategy, its fares policy and vehicle fleet renewal.

Peter Brown
34 Waterside Drive,
Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 1HU

D Di nearly made it!

The *Bookseller* magazine, in honour of fringe publishing, annually selects a list of the oddest book titles. Members will be delighted to learn that a book by Roger de Boer, that was reviewed in *Newsletter* 48, made this year's shortlist. But they will be disappointed that it was finally pipped at the post by *The Stray Shopping Carts of Eastern North America: A Guide to Field Identification*, which received 1,866 out of the 5,500 votes cast.

Roger de Boer's *D Di Mascio's Delicious Ice Cream: D Di Mascio of Coventry: An Ice Cream Company of Repute, with an Interesting and Varied Fleet of Ice Cream Vans* was a good contender with its lovely picture c.1934 of a striped and

decorated Austin Light van and a minuscule James motor-tricycle van outside D Di Mascio's Ice Cream Parlour — and many other evocative pictures of ice cream vans, salesmen and customers in suburban Coventry settings of the 1950s, with appropriate accompanying text. (ISBN 978-0-9543982-1-7) price £7-49. It can be obtained from Past Masters, 31 Queenswood Road, Birmingham B13 9AU, post-free.

RA

STOP PRESS Roger de Boer is in Ward G8, Moseley Hall Hospital, Birmingham, B13 8JL, following a limb amputation and stroke. RA

Book Reviews

- ◆ **EARLY MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION IN WILTSHIRE 1903 – 1914** Edited by Ian Hicks.
Wiltshire Record Society. Trowbridge, 2006
Hardback xxi + 554 pp illustrated.
ISBN 0-901333-35-2 £24-95 inc. p&p from Wilts.
Record Office, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge BA14 8BS

This is a large book, but its interest to the student of road transport history matches its size; it is obviously the product of immense and painstaking labour and carefully planned presentation / interpretation. The editor's introduction explains the licensing system, the registers themselves and the methods employed in preparing the text. There is also a short glossary, mainly of coachbuilding terms. Each register entry and its published version, comprises the vehicle number, name and address of owner, sometimes with added editorial identification, such as 'surgeon' or 'cycle agent', type of vehicle, colour of livery (which might include such detail as 'white body, red wheels' or 'body green – white lines'). Similar details are given in a single entry if the registration was subsequently used for another vehicle (with the same, or a different owner), the details being distinguished by bracketed figures. Subsequent sale(s) of the Wilts-registered vehicle, even if out-county, are given below the main entry in a smaller type face. This is complicated to describe, but easy to assimilate when using the volume.

The continuous updating of the register enables vehicle body changes to be identified, thus AM2739, originally a Panhard car, received a lorry body six years after registration. The compilers of the registers occasionally erred with marque or place names, for example AM4162, a GWR battery-electric trolley would have been an Elwell (not Fluck) Parker and AM258 'National Lamb Brothers' may well have been a National by Rose Bros. of Gainsborough. (As a temporary licensing clerk in student days, these white-collar workers of a century ago have the reviewer's sympathy). The introduction gives a short bibliography and the reviewer would like to take the opportunity to correct a mis-attribution which has been carried over from Philip Riden's *How to trace the History of your Car*: it was P A Kennedy who was responsible for the pioneering publication of the Nottinghamshire register for 1903. A short piece on vehicle registers from the reviewer's pen appeared in *Archives*, October 1965, and the results on work on Warwickshire's registers in *Warwickshire History* in 1983 and 1992. Spin-offs from this work then appeared in the A C Owner's Club *News and Post Horn*, May 2001. A record of the experiences of another county in vehicle registration (and road and traffic administration) could well have been added to the bibliography: R G A Chesterman *Laughter in the House. Local taxation and the motor car in Cheshire 1888-1978* (Cheshire Record Office, 1978).

The registers reproduced run from December 1903 to December 1914, registration numbers AM1 to AM4419. (It must be remembered that vehicle registration began in the infancy of the motor age, but some years after its birth in the previous decade). Cars, vans and motor cycles are

covered, but with the exception of four vehicles entered in the main sequence in error, no heavy commercials such as traction engines or brewers' drays. Unfortunately, the Heavy Motor Car Register is missing, but a careful calculation suggests that it would have contained only 80 vehicles by the end of 1914. However, the main series records vans for such owners as tailors, laundries and co-operative societies. Motor cycles (which are distinguished by an asterisk) are frequently registered to tradesmen, who would have used them to visit clients. During the period covered by this volume, Wiltshire was home to a notable small motor manufacturer, Scout Motors Ltd, originally Dean & Burden Ltd of Salisbury, whose output included cars, motor cycles, charabancs, buses and lorries; recorded registrations of the marque run well into three figures. These can be identified by indexes to the manufacturers of vehicles registered, which are supplemented by indexes of persons, trades and places, the last mentioned enabling migration of vehicles to be followed.

A few examples of personalised numbering have come to light, such as two early Aston Martins, re-using earlier numbers in 1920, and four vehicles registered by Albert Murray Ltd of Doncaster, to whom the AM registration number appealed. As the volume draws to its close, the registration of motor vans becomes more noticeable as tradesmen came to realise the usefulness of the motor vehicle. Motor and cycle 'agents' and 'engineers' are prominent in the list of trades, rivalled only by the clergy and doctors, whose professional activity must have been greatly facilitated by use of the motor car.

The transcribed registers end only a few months after the outbreak of the Great War, but already the War Department is registering staff cars, motor cycles and ambulances. After the war, possession and use of the motor vehicle would spread out from the nobility and gentry, the clergy, the medical profession, those whose technical competence and interests brought them into the cycle and then the motor trades, and those businesses with sufficient means and foresight to embrace the future. Transport historians are fortunate that a record society has been willing to move out of the traditional areas of scholarship for such bodies and provide an overview of a world on the cusp of change, a world we can recognise in the shape of a Ford, a Rolls Royce, a motor cycle or a van, but also the world of Toad in *Wind in the Willows*, with thrashing machine owners, wind engine manufacturers, saddlers, corn merchants and horse dealers.

Richard Storey

- ◆ **FROM TRACKWAYS TO MOTORWAYS**
– 5000 Years of Highway History by Hugh Davies.
Tempus Publishing – 192 pages, paperback,
ISBN 0 7524 3650 3; £17.99

After an Introduction, the next 55 pages attempt to give a summary of the development of the road system of mainland Britain, from footprints dated at 4500BC found in the mud of the Severn Estuary, up to the current day. This degree of compression inevitably means that the

treatment is superficial: turnpikes are covered in less than two pages and the implications of the enclosure movement in just a page. The changing responsibilities for roads since the late 19th century are not discussed, and little is said about the complex financial implications of developing and maintaining the network. The initiatives in the 1920s and 1930s such as the early bypasses and a few dual carriageways on new alignments, for example, the East Lancs Road, are not mentioned. However, it is good to see an assessment of the evidence for the date of the ridgeways, which were probably long distance routes only in the imagination of Victorian antiquarians.

The rest of the book is about the history of road engineering, and is far more fresh and thought-provoking. The techniques for spreading the weight of the traffic in order to minimise the damage to the road itself has had to be relearned since the Romans departed, though whether roads should be rigid or have some flexibility is still a matter for debate. There has always been the requirement for road surfaces to be hard-wearing, cheap and easy to lay and maintain; nowadays we also need them to resist skidding, suppress spray and limit tyre noise. Special mention is made of the work of John Metcalf (the remarkable 'Blind Jack of Knaresborough'), Thomas Telford and John Loudon McAdam (his middle name twice being printed as 'London'). A chapter on the shape of roads considers the development of thinking on such matters as gradients, road widths, bends, camber and junction design. Telford and his chief assistant, Henry Macneill, made a series of experiments concerning gradients and concluded that a maximum of 1 in 30 was desirable, though 1 in 20 was acceptable in the hilliest areas; values similar to these are still used for designing motorways. A chapter follows on the changing users of roads and the implications for their safety; here the author considers pedestrians and cyclists as well as horse-drawn and motorised traffic. The over-long Conclusions section is largely unnecessary but the Speculations are interesting and the historical Appendix useful.

The author was a scientist at the Transport Research Laboratory and writes with admirable clarity on a complex subject. The text is well supported by graphs and diagrams. There is an extensive bibliography and an index.

Peter Brown

◆ MAKING CARS AT LONGBRIDGE

– 100 Years in the Life of a Factory

By Gillian Bardsley and Colin Corke

Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2006.

ISBN: 978 0 7524 3741 5; Paperback; 192 pages; £14.99

Essentially this book tells the story of the rise and fall of the Longbridge motor car factory in Birmingham for its nearly one hundred year history, but it does it in pictures much more than in words. The text amounts to seven and a half pages but there are more than 300 pictures. The text is well written and draws out the main strategic changes in the lifespan of the factory, features such as ownership, from Austin to Rover MG via British Motor Corporation, British Leyland, British Aerospace and BMW are outlined, as are the various models of car that were produced at the plant. In a number of places one would like more detail to

have been given, and especially more explanation as to why certain events occurred, but given the constraints of space, it is an adequate potted history.

It is, however the pictures which are the heart of this volume. They are all from the same source, the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust and are deeply evocative. They cover a wide range of topics. Many of them are production lines, with varying degrees of mechanization, there are some fascinating shots of training schools, off-work rest spaces and the important visitors ranging from Adolf Hitler (on a visit to the Austin stand at the Berlin Motor Show), Churchill and de Gaulle to British royalty. Indeed, the Duke of Edinburgh was so unimpressed by Austin's post war models on a factory visit that Leonard Lord was motivated to engage Pininfarina to style the A40 and bring back Alec Issigonis with results we now know – the mini and the 1100. So in this version, the Duke delayed the final demise of the British owned industry; indeed the 1960s were an apparent success with British Motor Holdings producing eighty-eight different vehicles in the early 1960s. The pictures each have long captions with a full explanation of the key points, and the vast majority have not been previously published.

The foreword is by the Archbishop of York, who used to be Bishop of Birmingham, and Colin Corke was one of the chaplains to the factory (so the volume comes with divine endorsement!), while Gillian Bardsley is archivist to the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust. They are to be congratulated on a fascinating set of pictures which will appeal to ex-employees as well as enthusiasts, and industrial historians.

John Armstrong,
Thames Valley University

◆ TOCIA, Buses of the Llŷn Peninsular in North Wales

By John Dunabin

Published by The Omnibus Society, Provincial

Historical Research Group, 7 Nursery Close,

Emsworth, Hampshire PO10 7SP, 2007 (but bearing no date) ISBN 10-0901307-68-8, ISBN 13-978-0901307-68-2.

Softback; 58 pages. £9.95.

This is a welcome and very valuable study by a man who is a much missed friend of so many people in the R&RTHA and the Omnibus Society. Few books of this kind contain so much detail, to bring the story to life; proceedings at board meetings, details of all the people who were concerned in the story, and details of all the routes and their variations. Small matters like how much was paid to drivers and conductors on different occasions and larger ones like the purchase and disposal of vehicles all appear in the decisions recorded by the board. As the author says on page 25, "Viewed from around eighty years on, the Toccia story seems to be a succession of problems, some serious largely because of the company's small size, some recurring because of failure to resolve them". There can be few comparable records of the life of a business to compare with this.

There is one criticism – a lack periodical summaries of what the position was at crucial dates. How many buses they then owned; what services they were working at that time. I did not find this easy to follow, with its adherence

to a chronological succession of directors' meetings..

There is information about other businesses serving the peninsula; details of depots and a fleet list, examples of publicity, and timetables, prints of tickets and a host of photographs and maps. The book offers the reader a wonderful insight into the running of a bus company, and it is greatly to be recommended. In addition, Ken Swallow's introduction tells us just what a wonderful man John Dunabin was.

John Hibbs

◆ WHERE DO YOU WANT THIS LOT?

By Bob Rust. Gingerfold Publications
ISBN (13) 978-1-902356-20-4
Softback; 175 pages; £13-50

The author's service to the road transport industry was virtually parallel to my own and I therefore looked forward to his book with some anticipation.

It is a record of a commercial vehicle driver's experiences within the United Kingdom from 1955 to 1997, and consists of innumerable anecdotes from the private and state owned road transport industries.

The opening chapters relate to the pre-war and early war periods when the author travelled with his father, making his first trip in 1934 at the age of five weeks to the south coast, and later being in the area of the Coventry blitz of 1940.

In 1955, following his army service in the Far East, the author began his working life within the private transport industry, driving furniture vans.

He then moved to British Road Services Ltd., Hampstead,

and for the first time drove flat vehicles, such as Bristols, AEC's and Seddons, articulated and rigid. He comments also on the assistance provided to BRS drivers in respect of the prebooking of accommodation away from base and provision of expenses. This was also about the time that BRS increased the company's speed limit to 30 mph and reduced their drivers' standard working day from eleven hours to ten.

Driver's daily duties are explained with regard to trunking, tramping, local work, and changeover points, such as at Weedon. Delivery arrangements with various companies are listed together with some of the problems incurred.

A number of chapters are devoted to deliveries to particular areas of the United Kingdom, for example, the West, the Midlands, London, the South. These contain the histories of the transport cafes, descriptions of their owners and staff, and details of the excellent food and services provided by them over the years. There are also, throughout the book, many, many stories of people and occurrences, funny and otherwise.

During the post war period considerable changes began to affect the industry – bigger vehicles, motorways, increased speeds and weight limits for example, and these have continued into the 1990's. Bob Rust's stories capture these changes, and I believe they will provide a useful historical reference in future years.

However, I believe there is one drawback to this book and that is the contents of the final chapter "Ladies of the Road". Although comments are made by the publisher at the introduction of the book, I believe it should not have been included.

David Trindle

Book Notices

◆ U K AMBULANCES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Chris Batten.
Unpaginated [82 pp], illustrated, 2006 £10-00
Available from the author, 25 West Rise, Tonbridge
TN9 2PG

Chris Batten has produced a readable and well-illustrated survey of the ambulance as a vehicle, but also of the ambulance service over more than a century. The illustrations range from the MAB horse ambulance, a twin-tandem cycle litter and the City of London's Electromobile to the distinguished (but under-braked) Daimler DC27, the prototype Dennis FD4 and today's Mercedes.

The ambulance service has progressed from a variety of provision, including agency service, driver-only manning, county operation with its full-time administrative staff, 'swoop and run' or 'swoop and scoop', to today's sophisticated paramedic systems, not to mention the sometimes questionable and always expensive employment of the helicopter ambulance.

Many manufacturers and coachbuilders are featured in the book, together with military types such as the Austin K2 'blood wagon' and a 1 tonne Land Rover (on civilian stand-by duty in the 1989-90 dispute). The use of former PSVs as mobile control centres or first aid units and preservation projects also feature. Some sub-editing would have improved the text by removing occasional mis-spellings and adding page numbers, but even without it this comprehensive work, covering policy and operation, as well as vehicles and their makers, can be warmly recommended.

Richard Storey

◆ THIS TRUCKIN' LIFE

- The Reminiscences of a Truck Driver

By Laurie Driver (aka Dennis Burnier Smith) ·
Published June 2006 by Exposure Publishing, Liskeard
ISBN 1846852366 or 978-1-84685-236-7; £9.00

Autobiographical accounts from former goods vehicle drivers remain fairly thin on the ground, which makes this offering from a recently retired Manchester-based one all the more welcome. It tells of a varied career, stretching

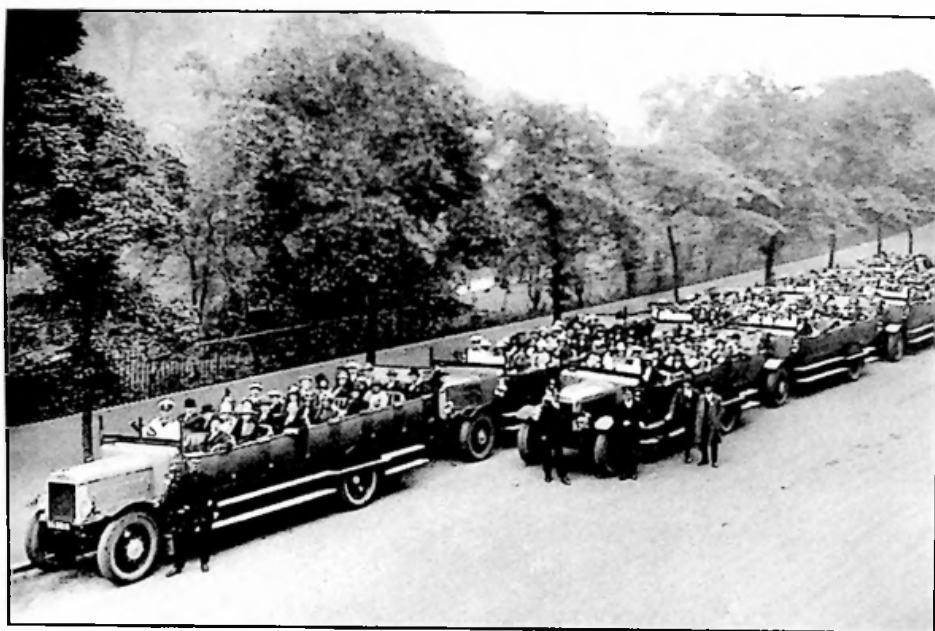
over 40-years, starting as a van boy in the days when parcels were delivered from the railhead, through a wide range of employers as was the customary fate of almost every truck driver, struggling to make ends meet in an unforgiving industry. It does not shrink from telling things as they were, warts and all, and in sometimes raw language. You had to be tough to survive all that life threw at you. In return you could expect poor wages and conditions, plus treatment as the lowest of the low. Herein you will find accounts of relentless toil, unsocial hours, the many fiddles and oft-times pathos and humour that surrounded what was very much a man's world. But, as the author rightly says, trucking was not just a job, it was a way of life.

Being able to empathize with much of what is related, it would be nice to say that it refers to times long ago and that the conditions described are now a thing of the past. But the account brings us right up to the very recent past and, in truth, little has really changed. The modern trucker may be largely spared the physical demands of roping and sheeting, constant mesh gearboxes, etc, but is faced with a whole new range of mental pressures and impositions as employers seek ever more efficiency and economy in their operations. Today the truck driver remains as always, regarded as some different breed, still not entitled to the same consideration as other workers.

DJB

Dating Charabancs and Ladies' Hats

In researching the article on the strikes of 1919 and 1921 earlier in this issue, the writer came upon two pictures on the Edinphoto website. This is compiled by Peter Stubbs in Edinburgh, and available to be looked at on your computers under www.Edinphoto.org.uk. Both pictures initially seemed pertinent to charabanc usage during the 1921 coal strike. Your Editor chose the one of charabancs in Princes Street, Edinburgh, illustrated here, beguiled by a caption saying that it was taken on the same day, 22 May 1921, a Sunday, as the one of charabancs at The Mound. 22 May would be perfect for the time of the coal miners' strike.



With Peter Stubbs' willing collaboration, the illustration was provided for *Newsletter*. Then, the doubts set in and, in consultation with our member Roy Larkin – who makes no more claim than your Editor to be a charabanc expert – the tyres, then the wheels, then the bonnets, headlights, sidelights and finally the hats worn by the ladies were studied. 1926/7 quite likely; 1921, no. The tyres are pneumatics, the wheels are discs, not spokes, and some but not all of the ladies' hats are redolent the era of dancing the Charleston.

Turning then to the picture of charabancs at The Mound, readily conceded as May 1921. Solid tyres, a less sophisticated ensemble, less sophisticated hats.

In fact, this picture is also to be found at page 314 of D L G Hunter's book, "Edinburgh's Transport" (Advertiser Press, Huddersfield, 1964). It is dated there as "1921" and some of the vehicles are specifically identified. But this was not the only source consulted. Roy turned to his friend Mike Sutcliffe, who swiftly identified the line up in Princes Street as being nine charabancs of Edinburgh Corporation. The vehicles are Leylands dating from 1919 and 1920. They are model O1 (the 1920, 32 seaters with 7 rows) and model L (1919, 27 seaters with 6 rows). They were indeed on solid tyres when new. They received bus bodies in the winter months of 1920/21 and 1921/22, reverting to charas for the summers. The pneumatic tyres may have been fitted quite early — in terms of any heavy vehicle being fitted with pneumatics — say c1925/26. This will have been a desirable modernising feature for

vehicles getting past their prime. The Princes Street photograph is, on balance, c.1926.

With Peter Stubbs' help, we now also offer the 1921 picture at The Mound, with, on left, White's charabanc about to set off on "White's Original Suburban Tour" 3/-. The vehicle is a Halley with registration SG2109, a number believed to have been issued in 1920. In the front centre there is a Scottish Motor Traction (SMT) Thornycroft, SG1627, loading for Forth Bridge, and elsewhere in the picture many other interesting vehicles.

Peter Stubbs has asked for 'feedback' for his Edinphoto website. He will receive a copy of this *Newsletter* (and of any subsequent issue, containing feedback from our readers).

Roy Larkin and RA

An Excursion to Buckfast Abbey and A Sequel Before the Magistrates

DAVID GRIMMETT

My quest for historical information on excursions and tours by coach recently took me to the Somerset County Records office in Taunton. I had learnt they possessed some records of Burnells Motors, Weston Super Mare. After trawling through some old accounts and timetables of their bus services I was not really getting anything appertaining to my search. However, as is so often the case, the last item I came across was the most interesting. If you are a regular reader of *Newsletter* and have a good memory, you might recall that in issue 47 I thanked Geoffery Jones for instilling in me an interest in the legal side of PSV operations. And so my eye was immediately drawn to a newspaper cutting in the archives of Burnells entitled "Sequel to Weston Roman Catholics Excursion". It has been impressed upon me that when researching you should learn 'to gut' books and articles, so within seconds I could see this article needed greater attention. To the desk - "Could I get a copy of this please", "Not really, as it is stuck into a book we cannot copy it - your best bet is to try the record library at Weston who will have the newspaper on microfiche." An email to the library asking if it would be possible to have a copy of a piece entitled "Sequel to Weston Roman Catholics Excursion" published somewhere in the Weston Mercury of 8 October 1932 received a very helpful reply and within no time at all a copy of the article was on my computer - it was a long piece so had to come as three sheets. So what was it that I found so fascinating? Here was the report of a court case brought by the police under the recently introduced 1930 Road Traffic Act legislation and in the traditions of the best Who Dunnit, please read the facts, then make your own mind up before seeing if you agree with the Bench.

This would have been an early case brought under the 1930 Act which sought to license operations of Public Service Vehicles. In essence if an operator wished to run excursions or tours for the benefit of individuals of the general public, a Road Service Licence was required. If, however, an operator hired out a coach to a third party to convey a private group this was classed as a Contract

Carriage - outside the scope of licensing. The article opens by stating this is "A case of considerable importance to all who are interested in the promotion of road excursions, whether as organisers or ordinary participants".

Appearing before the Bench were Mr. Cotter, being prosecuted "for using a public service vehicle and not having a road service licence therefore" and Mr. Atyeo, motor coach proprietor, "for allowing Mr Cotter the use of the vehicle." It transpired that Mr Cotter had approached Mr Atyeo on behalf of the Corpus Christi Church in Weston-Super-Mare to convey a party from that church to the consecration of Buckfast Abbey on 25 August 1932. Unbeknown to Mr Atyeo the following advertisement appeared in the Weston Mercury on 20th August;

OPENING OF BUCKFAST ABBEY THURSDAY NEXT AUG. 25TH.

Motor coach will leave Ellenborough Park (S.)

at 9.15am arriving Weston 9.20pm.

Tickets (including tea 10/6).

Apply not later than Tuesday next to D L Cockram

"Camelot", 76 Milton Park Road,

or D Cotter, 24 Beach Road

On learning of this advertisement, the office of the Traffic Commissioners telephoned Mr. Atyeo and warned him the operation would be illegal as neither he nor Mr. Cotter held a licence and that if Mr. Atyeo "permitted the use, by either Mr Cotter or Mr. Cockram, of his 'buses for the purpose mentioned in the advertisement he would be committing an offence." Mr Atyeo replied that he failed to see there was an offence on his part as he had hired out his vehicles as contract carriages and it was no concern of his as to their method of obtaining passengers.

Enter Police Constable Dunn; P.C. Dunn, as witness, said that on the morning of August 25th he received a ticket for the outing, with instructions to proceed with the party. "Three chars-a-banc belonging to Mr Atyeo, later one

belonging to a man named King of Bristol and another owned by Mr. Carter of Weston-Super-Mare, arrived and persons were loaded into them by Mr. Cotter. The latter approached witness and enquired if he wanted a seat. Witness showed his ticket and replied "Yes Please" P.C. Dunn then, apparently went on to give details of the day out.

Thus there was evidence that the trip had taken place, but when questioned, Mr. Atyeo said that he had hired out his coaches at "so much per coach", although "there was no written memorandum concerning this contract." He stated he was aware that if separate fares were charged a licence would be required. He agreed with the prosecution that his attention had been drawn to the advertisement and that if members of the public at large took tickets an offence had been committed. Mr. Atyeo further said he did not consider it wrong to hire out his coaches after receiving the telephoned warning. He had entered into a contract, but he had not been aware that any member of the general public would be conveyed. Mr. Atchley, who represented Mr. Atyeo, said his client had been absolutely frank but he had, in short, been between the devil and the deep sea.

Mr Jenkins who represented Mr. Cotter said he was not

calling Mr. Cotter in his own defence, he was not, in fact, calling any evidence. He submitted the only point was whether the carriages engaged were "express" within the terms of the Act. He contended they were not, and it was for the police to prove that any members of the public had travelled and "had been given facilities to purchase tickets.". Even P.C. Dunn had not purchased his ticket - he had been given it.

So there you have the essence of the case before reading the decision of the court what do you think?

THE VERDICT

After the Bench returned from a brief consultation in private, Mr. Barrow (chairman of the magistrates) announced:

"Mr Atyeo you have committed a technical offence and you are fined £1, but we certainly think you were misled in regard to this transaction. Mr Cotter, as the organiser of the event, you will be fined £5 and 5s witness expenses". The prosecution - Mr. Corpe - applied for an advocates fee of £3 3s authorised by the Ministry of Transport. Unless that sum was included it would have to be met by the public at large. Mr. Cotter had to pay that as well.

David Grimmer

BEFORE THE ACT OF UNION, 1707

From: *A Short Account of Scotland* by Thomas Morer, 1702

By courtesy of The National Library of Scotland – Resource Pack for Schools

Stage-Coaches they have none, yet there are a few *Hackneys* at Edinburg, which they may hire into the country upon urgent occasions. The truth is the Roads will hardly allow 'em those Conveniencies, which is the reason that their Gentry, Men and Women chofe rather to use their Horfes. However, their Great Men often travel with *Coach and Six*, but with so much caution, that besides their other attendance, they have a *Lufty Running Footman* on each side of the *Coach* to manage and keep it up in rough places.

But this Carriage of *Perfons* from place to place might be better fpared, were there opportunities and means for the speedier Conveyance of *Bufinefs* by Letters. They have no *Horfe-Pofts* besides those that ply 'twixt *Berwick* and *Edinburg*, and from thence to *Port-Patrick*, for the

fake of the *Irish Packets*; and, if I forget not, every Town the *Poft* passes through, contributes to the Charges. But from *Edinburgh* to *Perth*, and so to other places they use *Foot-Pofts* and *Carriers*, which though a flow way of Communicating our Concerns to one another, yet is such as they acquiefce in till they have better.

The *Revenue* of Scotland is low; some computed it at 30000 *l per Annum Sterling*.

AFTER THE ACT OF UNION

Submitted by Dave Bubier

I'm now arriv'd – thanks to the Gods! –
Through pathways rough and muddy:
A certain sign that makin' roads
Is no this people's study.

Yet, though I'm no wi' scripture crammed,
I'm sure the Bible says
That heedless sinners shall be damn'd
Unless they mend their ways!

Rabbie Burns 1759-1796

A Freight Industry Legacy

The name of Sutton & Co is perhaps less well known than some of their contemporaries. Those of 'Carter-Paterson' and 'Pickfords' passed very much into the language as household names, yet Sutton's were once

their equal amongst that pre-eminent group of 19th century carriers who achieved national status by working in conjunction with the railway companies and who prospered into the motor age. Sutton & Co claimed to

have invented the 'smalls' parcel system in the 1860s, distributing from depots located at railheads around the country.

Such was the wealth accumulated by Thomas Watson, manager and later senior partner of Sutton & Co, that his daughters decided on his death in 1910 to create a lasting memorial. They endowed a charity with an area of land at Barnet, Hertfordshire, and created an estate for former Sutton & Co employees. The Thomas Watson Cottage Homes survive to this day and provides 22 housing units

with the requirement that applicants must have worked in the freight carrying industry. Priority goes to former employees of Sutton & Co and then any successor company, including today the National Freight Company, Exel Logistics and DHL, (also known as the German Post Office).

Many 'almshouses' remain around the country, often with archaic entry qualifications but that at Barnet must surely be unique in catering for former lorry drivers and the like.

DJB

Coach - Boat

INTERMODAL TRAVEL IN THE 18TH CENTURY

LIVERPOOL AND WARRINGTON BOAT COACH.

THE Public are most respectfully informed, that the above old established Coach, continues to set out from the Bull and Punch Bowl Inn, in Dale-Street, Liverpool, every Morning at eight o'Clock, to the Red Lion Inn, in Warrington, from there to meet his Grace the Duke of Bridgewater's Boats at London Bridge, returns to the Red Lion, Warrington, to Dinner, and arrives at Liverpool at six o'Clock in the Evening.

The Favours of their Friends and the Public, will be gratefully acknowledged, by their obedient servants.

THOMAS KAY, Warrington.
SAMUEL KAY, Liverpool

The Manchester Mercury and Harrop's General Advertiser,
Tuesday, June 19, 1798

Grahame Boyes has submitted a panel reproducing a newspaper advertisement of 1798, commenting that it appears to have been an early example of inter-modal public transport. Your Editor sought help; it has been afforded by a member who prefers to remain anonymous, as his answer is not based on original research.

"Passenger packet boats operated on part of the Bridgewater Canal as early as 1767, and a service from Runcorn started in 1776. Boat travel was then much slower than by coach but more comfortable, which is presumably why a coach service was established from Liverpool to connect with the packet boat at Stockton Heath, just south of Warrington. The coach left Liverpool at 8am, met the packet boat at 10am, the passengers arriving at Manchester at 6pm. The reverse journey also started at 8am.

The Mersey & Irwell Navigation started a competing service in 1807, also connecting with

the Liverpool coach. This prompted the Bridgewater Canal to start a boat service from Liverpool to Runcorn, though this meant that passengers had to arrange for their luggage to be carried up beside the ten locks there to the waiting packet boat. From 1817 the Liverpool-Runcorn boat was a steamer, taking two to three hours for the crossing. Nevertheless, the coach service to Stockton Heath continued.

The Liverpool & Manchester Railway opened in September 1830, providing a far superior service for through passengers and hence the demise of the coach connection. However, this wasn't the end of passenger carrying on the Bridgewater Canal. Lightweight boats were introduced in 1843, capable of being pulled by two galloping horses at speeds up to 12mph, thus reducing the time for the journey from Manchester to Runcorn to 3½ hours. The Liverpool steamer connection continued, but railway competition meant that the fare all the way to Liverpool was only 6d more than the fare to Runcorn." It is not entirely clear who partook of dinner at the Red Lion in Warrington. Not the passengers who embarked in the packet boat at London Bridge (Stockton Heath) for Manchester at 10a.m; was dinner the first objective for those on the packet boat from Manchester?



A recent photograph of the steps at Stockton Heath where the passengers from the coach used to join the packet boat.

Bedford OWB Memories

ROGER DE BOER



Man Road Services, with that island's capital as its destination.

Then, there was a Kent-registered one on the Outer Circle route at Selly Oak, parked in a front drive, HKE186. This was used as a motor cycle transporter – about 1966.

In the early 1970s, I was under training and had to accompany an officer on a visit. To save time he allowed me to put my pedal cycle in the back of his car and took a route where a scrapyard was visible beneath a bridge. (Had I used the bike, the scrapyard would have been missed). An OWB was there, which I later returned to view

— it had a Scottish registration.

During August 2005, Warstones of Great Wyrley, Staffordshire, operated their 1944, ex-Northern Ireland Road Transport Board OWB on the four Fridays of that month, running routes in the Newport, Shropshire, area. During term time, it is used to carry schoolchildren. Acquired in 1996, it was restored to original, except that the seating is now a mixture of wooden and moquette ones – thinking of older passengers here. Unlike its 'twin' in Belfast Museum, its Duple body is original; that at Belfast is a replica.

I chose to travel on the 5th of the month. The weather was kind and I found that the offside rear corner wooden seat was the most comfortable of the type – in fact, because the slats were arranged in a curved manner, this was the case. To travel on a 61-year-old chassis, in normal bus service, is a rare privilege (perhaps otherwise achieved on Malta, until more recent times). Few OWBs are preserved, and fewer are in running order.

The first OWBs I encountered as a bus spotter were ex-RAF examples, re-registered with Douglas, the Birmingham contractor. At least one of a small fleet of these was to be found languishing in Manx Motors, Dogpool Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham, in the mid 'sixties. An Isle of Man connection was furthered when I bought a postcard at a rally – thinking it was the Brum contractor's bus – when all the time it was from Isle of

The last sighting of an OWB in use, (prior to 2005), was one used as a mobile fish and chip shop in Stotfold, Bedfordshire – I had visited the place to inspect a battery-electric Midland tower-wagon in someone's back garden (1983).

The only other Bedford OWB I can recall in the metal is a Salop-registered blue one lying derelict at Duxford airfield (1980s) – it could have been ex-Mid Wales Motorways of Newtown.

Returning to the 5 August 2005 outing, a fellow passenger remembered the type new in 1943, when he travelled to school in Leeds on Samuel Ledgard's buses.

