

Newsletter

ISSN 1750-9408

No.52
December 2007

The Roads & Road Transport History Association

www.rrtha.org.uk



This Great Northern Railway (Ireland) bus features this month as an illustration fitting two entirely different topics. The picture appeared in an article on "Transport Co-ordination in Ireland" in the July 1934 issue of "The Omnibus Magazine", (a source we gratefully acknowledge). Road transport developments in Ireland in from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s are the subject of short article later in this issue.

Also, the bus depicts the contrast between the access offered to the passenger in 1929 and that provided by the easy-access, buggy-friendly, low-floor buses of today. It is acknowledged that the open platform of most double-deckers of fifty, sixty and seventy years ago was always easy-access, — hence the (frequently ignored) warnings against alighting from a moving bus (or tram). But this Leyland Lion for the Dublin – Drogheda – Dundalk

service was not a double-decker; it was quite a different beast, placed on a moderately long-distance commuter/shopper service, not heavily used for short local journeys.

In the 1930s, young children rode in perambulators or were carried by their mothers. Did the push-chair (now termed 'buggy') even exist? If it did, then of course the child had to be unstrapped from it, the chair folded up and all lifted, along with accompanying impedimenta, on to the bus. This went on into the 1990s – and sometimes does even to the present day. In the 1930s, unless the child was a baby in arms (carried free), it would fall under the absolute rule that it could not occupy a seat if an adult passenger was standing. That was a condition attaching to the allowance of child fares, and one universally observed.

☐☐☐ In this issue ☐☐☐

The Vehicle Fleet of May's	
Motors of Elstead	2
Sependipity	6
Association Matters	8
Leaving No Stone Unturned.....	8
Editorial	8
IRS&TH Research Workshops.	9

Letters to the Editor	9
Roads and Bridges	
in Middlesex	10
Lobers Ltd - The Aftermath	
of an Accident	16
Book Reviews	16

Transport in Ireland	
in the 1930s	20
Coaching on the	
Kent & Sussex Borders.	20
Speeding Charabancs	24
War-time Notices on	
Coventry Corporation Buses	24

The Vehicle Fleet of May's Motors of Elstead

PETER MAY



The May's bus and taxi fleet at Glebe Meadow, Elstead in 1927 before the sale of the bus business to Aldershot & District. From left to right is Ford model T Tudor used as a taxi, Guy buses PF 8777 (on pneumatic tyres) and PD 2136, Ford model T bus TP 837 and the two charabancs.

Our Secretary asked me to write an article, elaborating on the makes and types of vehicles that we, as a small family business, purchased and used, most of which were mentioned in my recent book "The Full Turn of the Wheel". As described, this was spread over many years, from approximately 1920 to 1997. It caused me to really search the memory about the subject, and to try to find the underlying reasons for buying what we did at the time.

The range broadly was Bedford, Guy, Atkinson, and Scania. There were a few other makes operated from time to time, including some Dennis. So, what were some of the influencing factors?

Perhaps the main thing has been increased carrying capacity that has been achieved, from some two tons to twenty-five tons plus per load with goods carrying vehicles. From some fourteen passengers to over fifty on a single-deck bus and a very much-increased figure on modern double-deckers and an even greater figure on the new articulated buses. Aeroplanes and ships are carrying ever-greater numbers, and now trains are to be lengthened for more payload. All this has made a progressive impact on operators, manufacturers and legislators and is really an evolutionary process, with a common theme.

My parents' very first vehicle was a ¼-ton capacity van of unknown make. The first replacement in the early

twenties was a Ford T one-ton model, and the taxi was a Ford car. Therefore, the early influence was Ford. The buses were, two Fiat, two Guy, one Ford model T. A mixture of new and second-hand, bought I imagine for their apparent suitability of purpose and, without doubt, their price. My point is there would have been very little experience or operating knowledge to help to guide the decision to buy. That would only come the hard way.

Moving on a few years after the buses. There was a 1½-ton Ford lorry PL 5117 and an earlier Bedford. PJ 6931, which must have been one of the first Luton-built Bedfords, derived from imported Chevrolets, by General Motors. As a small boy, I remember hearing, but not understanding, much complaining about repeated failures of one universal joint on the Ford's propeller shaft, and this was quite difficult to replace. Because of this, Ford was out of favour and a new Bedford APF 418 was purchased in 1933. After this, a used Bedford CPL 6 and a further used Bedford EPL 861 were purchased in 1935 and 1936 respectively. So we are now all Bedford, all 2-tons capacity.

And we arrive at 1939. As stated in my book, the wartime replacement trucks were on Ministry of War Transport permit and from certain government-controlled suppliers as, obviously, military vehicle requirements came first. The main producers were Bedford, Ford, Dodge and Austin. All of these were similar in specification and the usual capacity was five tons. Our applications for new lorries were always Bedford, and luckily, that is what we were granted. In 1939, Bedford was probably ahead of the field in design with its "O" model. Consequently, the military specification that became the "OW" model, meaning 'O' wartime, was very easily adapted to become an army lorry. The main differences were wheels and

tyres, helper spring at the rear, and a big improvement, a twelve-volt electrical system in place of the six-volt. The brakes were also probably one of the best available for this category of carrying capacity.

The army rated the truck as a three tonner, whereas the civilian version was rated as a five tonner. It had a quite good overload capacity, therefore surprise, surprise, everybody loaded the poor thing with seven tons. However, compared with the machines that we had been running, the new ones were out of this world. The main problems with the 'OW' type was the burning out of exhaust valves, but this was not the fault of the vehicle, but the poor quality petrol that we had to use. Secondly, on the OW tippers, rear axle half shafts, and crown wheel and pinion failures were not unusual. Again this was not the fault of the vehicle, it was the result of continual overloading and the abuse that the transmission suffered on most building sites.

The interchangeability of spares was very useful on the Bedfords and, after the war, government surplus sales produced tons of new but cheap spares, and a fair supply of ex-army Bedfords, some unused, which we could easily convert to civilian applications. With the constant move towards heavier payloads, Bedford produced, post-war, the "S" type, or seven tonner. The first of these that we purchased were RPJ 84, SPJ 312 and UPD 173, followed by several more, mainly second-hand. Failings were that the rear engine plate that carried the rear engine mountings was too flexible causing it to crack. On pulling away loaded, the whole engine and gearbox would move backwards and forward, causing the lorry to 'leap' into action and progressively destroy the front engine mounting. Another problem was that one of the camshaft cams on number five cylinder would often wear away with the trouble that brings. George Taylor, in the

workshop, would remove the radiator and engine front timing cover, and somehow wriggle the old camshaft out, and the new shaft in. It became a bit of a habit.

As engines became larger, so did the petrol consumption, and the cost. We had to go diesel. Alongside the Bedford S-type truck, came the Bedford SB 33-seater coach, often with Duple Vega coachwork. At the same time, the Perkins R6 diesel engine became available as an option. A well-known coach firm in Bournemouth purchased six of these, but we understood that it was far from happy with the power unit. It was claimed that the diesels were noisy, caused much vibration, and the smell of diesel, mainly from leaks, was unacceptable. It was not helping its very high standard of passenger carrying so it removed all six R6s and replaced them with six new petrol engines. We purchased the six diesels, and fitted them into six of our seven tonners. We were not aware that Perkins was in major trouble with the engine, in that the timing chains were breaking, the overhead valves stopped moving, but the pistons did not – big bang, big trouble. In due course, Perkins effected a modification that doubled the single row chain into a double row. We were initially very worried that we had made an expensive mistake. George quickly established that all of the engines were of the modified type. Great relief!

The cost to Perkins Engines of warranty and remedial monies must have been colossal. I have the theory; it is only a guess, that it caused the forced sale of the business to Mersey-Ferguson because Perkins supplied all or most of the diesel engines to Massey-Ferguson for its tractors and other machinery.

With some of the later Bedford S types that we bought, a few developed the fault of jumping out of third gear when pulling hard and fourth gear on over run. Reason –



when the SB coach was produced, the gearboxes were changed from cast iron to aluminium cases. This was OK on passenger work but not on goods carrying, because the heat generated caused too much expansion and allowed the bearings to move out of position.

The arrival of the Bedford TK with its 330 cu. in. Bedford diesel, was followed by a heavier version with a 381 cu. in. engine and a five-speed gearbox. We bought two of these ten-tonners new, tippers with Telehoist bodies and tipping gear. Having so many years of pretty good results from Bedford, we naturally anticipated that it would continue. We were more than disappointed as they were trouble from the start. The engines were particularly disappointing as were the entire vehicles. Somewhere I have a copy of a letter that I wrote to Vauxhall Motors listing these faults but I can no longer recall what they were. I think that most of it was in the design and it was a long list.

I now had to forget all this and get on with finding a solution. What I think it all boiled down to was that both manufacturers and operators could no longer continue to get a 'quart out of a pint pot'. We did buy an ex-demonstrator Bedford KM six-wheeled tipper with a 466 cu. in. engine, which was as new, but no more successful. From there on, we limited our Bedfords to the seven-ton TK 330 model, which was no problem.

We purchased two A.E.C. Monarchs with 7.7 engines from Crow Carrying Co. Ltd. There were new as tankers, so we bought them as chassis/cabs and built our own flat bodies on them. One was RTW 915 but I cannot recall the other's registration number. Another A.E.C. was a Mammoth Major eight-wheeled flatbed. It also had the 7.7 engine with three axle brakes, four-speed gearbox with an additional two-speed gearbox ("two stick") and single drive. It was most likely an ex-B.R.S. vehicle and was no trouble. When it was born, it was legally limited to 20 m.p.h. We also bought NVA 165, an A.E.C. Mercury with AV470 engine, five-speed gearbox and a 20-foot dropside body. It was a good vehicle except for poor brakes – we fitted an extra brake servo, but it made no difference.

Later, we had a new A.E.C. Mercury built as a tipper, 156 MPH. This was the first mention that I can remember where the manufacturer stated its gross weight. Option was 12 tons or 14 tons gross. We opted for 12 tons, but fitted with air brakes, AV470 engine (governed to 1,850 r.p.m.) and A.E.C. five-speed synchromesh gearbox. This really was an upmarket machine and was the pride of the fleet. It was absolutely no trouble, largely, I am sure, because it operated within its designed weight.

During 1960, Geoff Wigley, who was a salesman for Guy Motors, was on the A3 three miles from Elstead and he was accompanied by Mr Medlam, a long-standing employee of Guy Motors. Medlam had been to May's buses, circa 1926, to remove engine, and repair engine sub-frame, under warranty, on a Guy bus belonging to my father, Dick May. Medlam said to Wigley "let us go and visit Dick May at Elstead" and so I met them both. The eventual outcome was that May's Motors (Elstead) Ltd. (MME) became an agent for Guy Motors as we had the retail site and commercial workshop there already. We were able to buy through MME for May's Motors

Transport Ltd., to advantage.

Guy Motors produced two basic ranges, the Warrior and Invincible trucks. The Warrior had an accent on lightness, and did not exceed 24 tons gross. It had an A.E.C. AV470 engine, A.E.C. five-speed synchromesh gearbox and an Eaton two-speed rear axle. The usual build for the Invincible was Gardner 180 and ZF six-speed box and double-drive rear-axes, with limited-slip third differential. Neither range had power steering. I am writing this article from memory, consequently I cannot recall our introduction to two-speed axles. However, we did use them extensively with no problem.

The A.E.C. engine was not without its problems. It had many head gasket failures so increase the torque to head studs. The result was that the studs pulled out of the block and this required a stepped stud, being to a larger diameter at the lower end and retapping the thread into the cylinder block – not an easy job. The oil sump was prone to cracking, and was difficult to weld, as it contained magnesium. Fuel pump life was short, as was the water pump. These were not serious, but the working life of the components was short, compared with our A.E.C. Mercurys. The engine tended to issue black smoke when working to maximum. On initial delivery sometimes the 4th/5th synchromesh cone would seize and the lot came to a sudden and juddering halt.

I mentioned earlier that we had two A.E.C. Mercurys, with AV470 engine and neither was any trouble. There were as original, set at 1,850 maximum r.p.m. The Guy Warrior's AV470 engines were set at 2,200 r.p.m. – 20% higher. Head gaskets, head bolts, sumps cracking, short-life water pumps and fuel pumps, black smoke, gearbox seizures on initial mileage, in our view, was down to one thing – higher revs. It was working beyond its design limits. Another difficulty with the Warrior range was, in order to accommodate the fully 'tippable' cab, the throttle linkage was a flexible cable, from the throttle pedal to the injector pump. This frequently seized but soon cured by a modified cable, and was no further trouble. The Warrior range came as four, six and eight wheel formats and all had A.E.C. AV470 and five-speed gearboxes, Eaton two-speed axles and tilt cabs. The air cleaner was mounted behind the nearside front wheel, and did collect quite a lot of road dust and dirt. The fuel filter was mounted on the nearside of the chassis, but was in the airstream of the engine-cooling fan. On a very cold morning, the lorry would start OK but after some three or four miles, the draught from the fan would cause the diesel to wax up and stop the engine.

All of our Guy eight-wheeled tippers were Invincibles with Gardner 6LX or 6LXB engines, ZF six-speed gearboxes and double-drive axles, tilt cabs and air-assisted brakes. One early problem was that sixth overdrive gear would split and this was soon "beefed up" by ZF. The problem was probably due to the high torque and low revs. (1,750 r.p.m.) of the legendary Gardner engine, a beautiful piece of engineering, in its day. The parking brake on six and eight wheelers was a multiple ratchet type, which progressively operated a horizontal rack. On tippers, in particular, overspill of soil, or perhaps coal, when mechanically loaded, would compact into the bottom of the teeth of the rack, so that the pawl could not

fully engage. Sometimes, when fully applied, there would be an almighty bang, and the vehicle was free to move.

On the whole, the Guys of that period, early sixties onward, were quite advanced in concept and design. We sold and operated quite a few through that time. A few random registrations come to mind: 230 PPE, 225 SPA, 3366 PK, PPF 469, 927 XPK, 928 XPK, 8914 VP, 8915 VP and 824 XPJ. After this came the Guy Big J in 1964 with Guy Motors becoming part of the British Leyland Motor Corporation. Production at Wolverhampton finally ceased in 1978.

When the Perkins 6.354 engine became available, it was fitted in several different makes of chassis, which gave a wider choice of vehicle make to operators. Whilst the Guy vehicles, in our case, covered the heavier range in our fleet, we did use the 6.354 in some Dodge and Dennis trucks. Among the registrations I can remember with this engine are EPK 318B, CPK 775B and GPK 944C. There were some tractor units and some two-axle tippers in both Dodge and Dennis chassis and, in most cases, two-speed axles. We were nine miles from Dennis Brothers' Guildford factory, and they had a very useful retail commercial workshop, which was very helpful on several occasions.



A couple of odd Dennis found their way into the fleet. A four-wheeled 16-ton gross Dennis Hefty HPH 176, ex R.J. Hewitt with Gardner 6LW engine, Dennis gearbox, hub reduction axle and a very tidy Dennis Max 6, a 'chinese six' twin-steer with Dennis engine and 5-speed gearbox, coachbuilt cab and all-aluminium platform body. Ex Yorkshire Imperial, WPK 51 was a very clean and smart vehicle but it had one big problem. The steering lock on the two front axles was very, very small. Looking back, it

was used mainly for deliveries of ten tons of bagged potatoes to the Old Covent Garden in London, which was designed for the horse and cart. To inflict this vehicle on a driver, night after night, was probably not very fair. Somehow they used to manage, because it always turned up in the yard in the morning, empty!

After the Guys and the experience of the trouble-free Gardners, we started buying the Atkinson Borderer tractor units at 32 tons gross, and eight-wheelers with Gardner 6LX 150 (then 6LXB 180), David Brown six-speed overdrive gearboxes, and Kirkstall double-reduction axles. The first two were used vehicles – 492 GEW and VMS 153. Subsequent purchases, if new, were fitted with Eaton 2-speed, 18000 series axles. The early ones had ratchet handbrakes, over which the driver had to climb. The risk was that it might be kicked off and there was then a panic to reapply the brake, which took time.

As time went by, obviously improvements were made. For example, the handbrake was replaced with a Clayton Dewandre air valve, which could be an emergency brake, was easy to hill start and would release the brakes from parking. Parking on the Atkinson was good, as both front and drive axles were braked together. A few registrations of this type were MPE 15D, SPJ 560F, VPG 235G, BPE 818H, DPE 578J, KNY 501D, LNY 441D and KPK 744K.

When we first started continental work, the need for sleeper cabs became very obvious and we bought two of the Atkinson sleeper-cabbed tractors (NPC 405L and OPH 515L), which were not exactly luxury. However, we had proved the point that you get what you pay for. Our breakdown and failure rate had dropped dramatically, and somehow they almost always managed to get home. As history relates, Atkinson became Seddon-Atkinson, and that became part of Iveco.

Along the way, we had taken over the Ben Turner Ltd. loadloader work and bought its Foden 32-ton tractor which had a Gardner 6LXB engine, but we replaced it with an Atkinson. We had also taken on Fulmen Batteries deliveries from Aldershot, and bought its 1981 W-registered 32-ton Fiat

tractor unit. We continued to operate this machine, with no trouble whatsoever, until the rust was taking hold of the cab, and it became rather scruffy. We had also bought an ERF eight-wheeler with Gardner 150, David Brown six-speed double-drive, to carry concrete products from Aldershot, painted in our customer's colours. It gave no problems.

We now bought a Scania tractor unit, TPK 697M, and we

had achieved reliability and sophistication, including the wonderful power steering!

We have now covered from about 1920 to about 1974 and had seen some changes. We bought two Volvo 88 32-ton tractors with R-registrations and sixteen-speed gearboxes to work for Frigoscandia Ltd. on temperature-controlled work in U.K. and Europe in its livery. We were not happy with their brakes, but I really believe that they were much too fast and that was the real trouble.

From 1974 onwards, there was a procession of Scania 110, 111, 112 and 113 models, mainly tractors but some multi-wheelers. The changing nature of the work to move more bricks caused us to move to a greater number of 38-tonnes gross vehicles. The Scania's were well able to handle the

increased weight, but it took its toll. We converted two tractors to three axles by adding a Granning non-steer, but fully-liftable, second axle. We changed a couple of tractors to factory-built twin-steers. They were, in my opinion, near to their limit on traction and steerability, but they did not fail. However, it was not surprising that fuel consumption went up, brake maintenance went up and tyre wear on tractors and trailers went up. Regrettably, the rate did not.

This narrative is a cross-section of the vehicles that have passed through our hands over the years. There are many more that I have not mentioned. It has been a memory exercise, therefore much may have been forgotten. I hope, because of this, I have not made too many untrue or inaccurate statements, if so, my apologies.

Sependipity

In *Newsletter No.48* you printed a template letter that I suggested could be used in approaches to local family history societies. I thought, therefore, you might be interested in the responses I received as a result of this letter appearing in the *Liverpool Family Historian*, the journal of the Liverpool and South West Lancashire Family History Society.

I had first of all a lengthy phone call, reflecting on the working conditions of the times, from an elderly man whose father had worked at the Liverpool Corporation Tramways carriage works at Lambeth Road in the 1920s, and later at Edge Lane when, from 1928, the construction of tram and bus bodies had been transferred there.

Then the granddaughter of a 1906 tram conductor wrote to tell me how her grandfather had had to give up "a good job" because his route took him past the cemetery where his son, who had died as a baby, was buried. Her mother had told her that in 1906 the conductors had to hold the different packs of tickets in their hands and in their pockets, so he had made himself a piece of wood with a ledge at the bottom on which the ticket packs could rest, holding them in place with a thick rubber band. She said the Corporation Tramways Department thought this was a good idea and set about providing these boards for all their conductors. Grandfather was somewhat put out to have received no financial acknowledgement for his idea. No suggestion scheme then, obviously!

I had a note from a man whose great-uncle, when he married in 1896, was a 20-year-old omnibus driver living in North Hill Street, Toxteth Park. His address would put him just 330 yards walk from the small bus depot and stables at Malta Street which, until their sale to the Liverpool United Tramways & Omnibus Co in 1893, had been the operating base of Bath Bros who ran omnibuses along the line of docks. Liverpool Corporation took over from the United company in 1897. Whether or not this was this man's workplace we know not – he might have gone to work 300 yards further away at United's larger Mill Street depot. By the time of the 1901 census, however, great-uncle was an electric tram driver, living in Miles Street, not far from the Dingle electric tram depot

from where the first electric trams had started operating in 1898 – and which would have made Malta Street and Mill Street depots redundant. Great-uncle's younger brother also worked on the trams, as a conductor – a typical family tradition.

Then there was the lady who wrote to ask if I could explain the difference between "coachman domestic" on an 1884 marriage certificate and "coachman groom" on the 1891 census. I passed the query around, including to last year's R&RTHA Reading conference speaker, Sarah Needham, without any completely satisfactory result. But in the course of doing so I was directed by one Family History Society member to paragraph 2203 of chapter 41 of *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* where I would find the duties of the 19th century coachhouse and stables described [www.mrsbeeton.com/41-chapter41.html].

But the real pointers to further research came with three other responses.

A call from a Family History Society member put me in touch with a man whose grandfather had started a business in Liverpool as brewers' grains merchants in 1889, and who had himself joined the company in 1944. Liverpool had expanded at a great rate in the 19th century and its inhabitants needed milk, but Merseyside was not a dairy farming area. Town cowkeepers maintained small dairy herds, often at the end of terraced streets and close to their customers, to provide a large proportion of the urban milk supply, and in Liverpool this was to continue well into the 20th century. The economics were apparently simple. Dairy cows would be provided by farming families in rural areas, such as North Yorkshire, and a branch of those families would set up their dairy in urban Liverpool. When the milk yield had fallen to an unprofitable level, the cow would be fat enough for the butcher. The brewers' grains, or draff, were a by-product of the local brewing industry, from the residues of malted and unmalted cereals. They were high in digestible fibre and good quality protein. The company had owned the third Bedford 2-ton truck off the production line when it was introduced alongside the Chevrolet range. The firm's last horse went in 1942, with the granting of a licence to

purchase a second Fordson.

It was obvious from a long and fascinating phone conversation with this gentleman that I was speaking to someone who had known not only the ins and outs of this under-researched domestic industry but also the cowkeepers themselves – and their families as well. By chance, for that is the way of things, I discovered that there is research going on in the Sedbergh & District History Society into the link between North Yorkshire and the Liverpool cowkeepers which should surface in an article in *The Selbergh Historian* in the coming winter. I have now introduced the brewers' grains merchant and the Sedbergh researcher to each other – to great advantage!

Another area where more research would not come amiss is the 19th century coachbuilding industry, certainly that part of it in Liverpool. I had a note from a lady whose husband's ancestors were coachmakers, who had moved about the country seeking work. She had been in touch with Graham Stevenson, the Transport & General Workers Union transport national organiser, who had told her about the United Kingdom Society of Coachbuilders. Like many craft societies the UKSC, which, from its formation in 1834, could claim to have almost all coachbuilders in membership, was engaged in the "tramping system". Stevenson had explained that the UKSC controlled entry into the trade so that there would not be too many coachbuilders chasing too few jobs. If they became unemployed they went to the next town, where they could call on the local branch to house and feed them until they got work or moved on to the next town, often to stay at a pub managed by a former member. Hence, it was suggested, the *Coachmakers Arms* or the *Wheelwrights Arms*. He had said that sometimes "coachbuilders found themselves travelling across the entire country before they found employment, with the Society helping them every step of the way". The records are kept at the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick. [The UKSC became, by merger with several other organisations, the National Union of Vehicle Builders in 1919, and then it merged with the Transport & General Workers Union in 1972.] My correspondent gave me an outline of the movement of a coachbuilding member of her husband's family between 1851 and 1874 – from the Potteries to Finsbury (London), back to Staffordshire, then to Saltley (Birmingham) and eventually to Salford.

Finally came the discovery of a lady in Queensland, Australia. She and her husband had lived in Heswall, on

the Wirral, until 1951, when they had emigrated to Australia. Her father had been employed by the Crosville Motor Company at Heswall in 1920, where he was responsible for the tyres (originally, she recalled, supplied by Dunlop and later by Michelin). Then he was given the same responsibility at West Kirby, and during World War 2 was provided with a motor cycle to travel to Flint and sometimes to Rock Ferry. She remembered Johnny Pye as a local taxi proprietor and owner of the Heswall Picture House. Pye sold his Heswall bus business to Crosville in 1924 and concentrated on his North Wales coach business. She told me how during the war she often stayed with her parents and her sister on holiday at Colwyn Bay, where Mrs Pye owned a guest house while John and his son ran their coaches. I was able to tell her that the road that runs to the rear of the bus station in Heswall is Pye Road and the pub that stands where the Crosville depot once stood is the *Johnny Pye*.

But this lady's transport credentials went back further, for her great-great-grandfather, John Richardson Gorst (1795-1873) was the Liverpool coachbuilder who had built the Lord Mayor's coach, still in use today. I asked its custodian, at Croxteth Hall, if the coachbuilder's name could still be found on the coach, but it has gone. My Australian correspondent thought it might have disappeared during the course of one of the coach's renovations (of which she knew there had been at least two, in 1913 or 1927, though probably more recently also). All reports about the coach give its date and place of construction as "about 1820 at Great Charlotte Street", but if the approximate date is to be accepted then it is more likely that it was built at Gorst's earlier coachbuilding premises in Lime Street. He was certainly still in Lime Street in 1832 when he is recorded in the Liverpool Poll Book as having voted for the two Liberal reformers, William Ewart and Thomas Thorneley.

John Richardson Gorst's eldest son, Thomas Richardson Gorst had sailed to Australia in 1854 to accompany some carriages on their voyage to Melbourne on board the ship *Fulwood*. The J R Gorst & Co branch of the family finished with its founder's death in 1873, but his elder brother William was also a coachmaker, and his sons (one of them another John Richardson Gorst) and grandsons were also involved in allied trades such as trimming.

All this sparked off by one short letter published in the journal of one family history society!

Ken Swallow

BINDING NEWSLETTER

Binding of *Newsletter* can be carried out by Chew Valley Bookbinders of Keynsham in a choice of cover colour at a price of £14 per volume. Optimum is to bind three years' copies and include the Conference papers for the relevant years. Nos 37-48 (2004-2006) have been done in this way. Further information may be had from: Dave Bubier, 15 Alianore Road, Caldicot NP26 5DF. E-mail: OS4DJB@aol.com

NEW CVRTC WEBSITE

Our corporate member, the Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club tells us that it has a new website now functioning, and invites our members to visit it. It is at www.cvrta.uk.com

Association Matters

NEW MEMBER ~ Nina Smith of Hebden Bridge

Leaving No Stone Unturned

The Association's autumn event at Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery attracted 42 paid bookings. The great success this year was that one-third of the bookings were by non-members – principally members of local history societies, civic trusts and local archives.

"Leaving No Stone Unturned" booklet

Hopefully, this may be produced mid-January. It should contain all the talks by speakers, plus a feature that has proved extremely popular, 200 words for any organisation represented at Leeds.

A small selection of the entries (outside those for our own existing corporate members) give a flavour of the wide range of bodies making themselves known in this way to R&RTHA members and which, conversely, have been made aware of the R&RTHA:

Leeds Civic Trust, West Yorkshire PTA, University of the Third Age, UK Bus Awards, Kent Family History Society, Slaidburn Heritage Archive, Business Archives Council and The Ephemera Society.

Editorial

There are several themes in this *Newsletter* that are not confined to one article or Letter to the Editor. Perhaps the most important theme is that of government regulation, particularly of buses, but extending to haulage as well. This is a current political theme, so *Newsletter* deliberately highlights two items where it intrudes – and two others are mentioned here. The two deliberate references are (a) to a talk to be given in York by Dr Roy Edwards and (b) the notes on Transport Co-ordination in Ireland in the late 1920s, early 1930s, coupled with the GNR (I) bus pictured on the front page. The visit to Ireland deals with the clear-cut imposition of regulation (and anti-competition legislation) at that time. The two more incidental mentions of this theme occur firstly in Ian Yearsley's review of a very curious book "CQB – the story of a North East England parish", and, more tangentially, the monopolies created by territorial agreements, highlighted in Peter Shilson's Letter and Peter Jaques reply.

Peter Jaques' reply brings us to another theme to be found elsewhere in this issue – vanished and forgotten local authorities. Not only Perry Barr Urban District Council, but, perhaps to many readers who are not residents

who still cherish the former County, the County of Middlesex itself, swallowed up by Greater London over forty years ago. Is Middlesex now "forgotten"? Once it was a proud and populous authority which could afford to distribute to its older school-children a very interesting volume on the work of the County Council, and even trust that most of the children would be competent to read it – if they chose to do so. The copy that has been relied upon for *Newsletter* was given to – not awarded as a prize to – a girl in Bishopshalt School, Hillingdon.

A further theme in this *Newsletter* is the legal limitation of the speed of heavy motor vehicles to 12 miles per hour, and how, despite this severe speed limit, charabanc excursions were being undertaken as early as 1912 – see the article on Lobers Ltd – and in 1922 – the article on Speeding Charabancs. In this connection, *Newsletter* has mentioned early police speed traps on at least two previous occasions. "In the Police Trap" in *Newsletter* 40 and "Warnings of Speed Traps" (for motorists) in issue No.49.

Both the financial accounts at the end of the Lobers Ltd article and the fines imposed on the charabanc drivers in



President:

Professor John Hibbs O.B.E.

Acting Chairman:

Professor John Hibbs O.B.E.
Copper Beeches
134 Wood End Road
Erdington, Birmingham
B24 8BN

jahibbs2@hotmail.com

Secretary:

Chris Hogan
124 Shenstone Avenue
Norton, Stourbridge
DY8 3EJ

roadsandrtha@aol.com

Treasurer:

Joyce Jefford
Whitegates Farm
Hatton, Market Rasen
LN8 5LS

Research Co-ordinator:

Tony Newman
21 Ffordd Argoed, Mold
CH7 1LY

toekneenewman@hotmail.com

Academic Adviser:

Professor John Armstrong
Thames Valley University
London W5 5RF

Newsletter Editor:

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

rogeratkinson@f2s.com



NEWSLETTER No.53

- ☐ The target date for issue of No. 53 is 6 March 2008

Contributions by
7 February

- ☐ Provisional target date for No. 54 is 5 June 2008

Contributions by
9 May 2008

- ☐ The 2007 subscription covers Nos. 53 to 56

the Speeding Charabancs article bring up the comparative value of money in 1915 or 1922, compared with the present day. A useful website is measuringworth.com. This tells us that the £15.34 compensation (plus costs) recovered by Garnsiton, the bus conductor, whose arm was broken,

would have equated to £885.14 in 2006, based on the Retail Prices Index; but based on the increase in average earnings, £15.34 in 1915 equates to £4539.48 in 2006. The £2.00 speeding fine imposed in 1922 equals £75.05 in 2006 per RPI, or £333.04 based on average earnings. RA

Institute of Railway Studies & Transport History

RESEARCH WORKSHOPS 2007-08

Grahame Boyes suggests that there are at least two afternoons in the winter programme of our corporate member the Institute of Railway Studies, in York, that R&RTHA members might like to attend. All are welcome; light refreshments will be served. There is no charge.

The events are held in the Yorkshire Rail Academy at the National Railway Museum, York. The YRA is reached from within The Warehouse at the NRM, off the Great Hall, or through the Academy's own entrance off Leeman Road. The YRA is not open to the general public - you will need to use the entryphone to get into the YRA. Please do not enter the YRA more than 10 minutes before the advertised starting time. Ask at the Museum's welcome desks or at any information point if you need help.

The National Railway Museum is about 3 minutes' walk from York railway station via the footbridge. Please use either public entrance to the NRM, and tell the staff at the desk that you are attending the Institute of Railway Studies workshops. Cycle parking is available at the City Entrance. Motorists please note that NRM parking charges apply (except for registered-disabled parking, available at the City Entrance).

The events are:

14.00 ~ Wednesday 20th February 2008

EARLY MOTORING CULTURES IN BRITAIN

Craig Homer (Manchester Metropolitan University)
'The modest motor for the man of moderate means':
marketing the car before World War One'

Bill Luckin (University of Manchester) and David Sheen
(University of Bolton)
Death on the roads: a case-study of Manchester
during the Second World War

14.00 ~ Wednesday 12th March 2008

ASPECTS OF INTER-WAR RAILWAYS IN BRITAIN
Gerald Crompton (University of Kent at Canterbury)
Railways and the state in the UK in the twentieth
century

Roy Edwards (University of Southampton)
Technical change and regulation: the failure of the
state c1919-c1933

The session on 20 February clearly embraces topics pertinent to our Association. The Session on 12 March, whilst more railway orientated, has Dr Roy Edwards as a speaker. Dr Edwards gave one of the talks at the R&RTHA's "Leaving No Stone Unturned" in Leeds on 27 October 2007. Moreover, regulation is a subject pertinent at the present time to road transport, not purely to the railways.

Letters

MIDLAND RED AGREEMENT and BIRMINGHAM BOUNDARIES

I enjoyed the R&RTHA workshop 'Leaving No Stone Unturned' on 27 October and have found the sample *Newsletters* fascinating. The challenge of unearthing road transport history in all the places that evidence is hidden is a daunting one and I shall write to you further with one or two suggestions.

I read with interest in *Newsletter* 50 the reproduced article by O C Power on "40 Years of 'Painting the Midlands Red'" In particular I noted on page 7 the reference to the non-competitive agreement drawn up in 1914 between the company and Birmingham Corporation. Under this agreement the Corporation was to take over all services inside the city boundary.

I was brought up in Great Barr from the late 1940s until 1955. Only Midland Red ran services beyond Perry Barr towards Walsall, along the A34 to its junction with the Newton Road and Queslett Road (Scott Arms). Route 119 went from the City Centre as far as the city boundary at the Scott Arms, and route 118 ran onwards to Walsall. 119 was thus wholly within Birmingham. Does anyone know

why there was this exception to the agreement, whether it was included in the 1914 document or whether the change was made after the date of the interview with Mr Power?

The need for accuracy and thoroughness was repeatedly made at the workshop. I note with amusement that the 'Archive Awareness Campaign' postcard that you sent with our booking forms contains a transcription error! The photograph from the West Glamorgan Archives of the Welsh female prisoner in 1903 clearly shows her name as Gwen Davies but the postcard's caption records her as Gwen Davis. No wonder the Internet gets confused!

Peter Shilson, 18 St Chads Drive, Leeds LS6 3QD

The query was referred to Peter Jaques of our corporate member, The Kithead Trust. Peter replied:

The answer is quite simple, but one that can easily have passed from memory. Perry Barr was a separate Urban District, most of which was incorporated into Birmingham on 1st April 1928. Rather than interfere with the status quo, Midland Red continued by arrangement to provide the services on behalf of the Corporation within the

extended boundary and Birmingham Corporation fares and conditions were introduced. The same thing happened in 1931 when large parts of Castle Bromwich and Sheldon were brought into the City. There was so much housing development in the old Perry Barr area that short workings were gradually introduced to Great Barr and (later) Beeches Estate and also to New Oscott on the Sutton service. These were wholly within the extended Birmingham boundary and it was these workings that were eventually transferred to Corporation operation during 1957/8.

BEDFORD UTILITY OWB - as a final point on this subject, the Omnibus Society (Provincial Historical Research Group) carried chapter and verse in their 2006 Newsletters of the re-bodying of many of these in the early post-war period with new bus or coach (Vista) bodies by Duple. Relatively few of the originals escaped this programme, and even fewer retained their wooden slatted seats. If operators chose to replace these with upholstered ones they had to reduce the seating capacity to meet Construction & Use Regulations which, amongst other things, required that seat backs were sufficiently close to the sides to prevent passengers having their pockets picked from behind!

Dave Bubier

"HELLO COASTAL"

I support the favourable review in Newsletter 51 pp.13-14,

that Corinne Mulley accorded to this new book. May I just comment on one or two other points that I found praise-worthy in it? It gives an insight into the complex arrangements of coach booking agents and their trade associations, explaining the complexities of bookings and allocation of seats, in an era when it was all done by telephone and post, on paper forms, and not a computer in sight.

My own first workplace after leaving school was a station similar to Victoria Coach Station, but much smaller, namely Lower Mosley Street in Manchester, and later on I worked for Thomas Cook, so all the procedures described here are familiar and are accurately described. One mystery it did solve for me was why at Lower Mosley Street in 1951 we held local bus timetables for all BET operating companies; this was an echo of the wartime role of Victoria Coastal Coach Station as an information centre on local bus services throughout the country.

Ian Yearsley

CHURCH WITH AN INTEGRAL BUS GARAGE

In the book review in this *Newsletter* of "CQB, the story of a North East England Parish" there are couple of references to the 1960s church at Bowburn having a coach garage built as an integral part of it. Is this really the only church with such a feature? I know that the Carmelite Church in Lisbon had a tramway into its churchyard.

Ian Yearsley

Roads and Bridges in Middlesex

For the golden jubilee of the County of Middlesex (1889 – 1939) a hardback book was produced, with a Foreword by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. It was intended to be read by school-children and their parents, giving them an understanding of the County Council's work. Mr Chamberlain ended with:

"The passages on the value and dignity of civic duties should serve to inspire men and women of ability and public spirit to participate in the responsibilities of local administration and to bear their part in service to their fellow citizens."

The indexed and illustrated book ran to 240 pages. The extract below reproduces, with two of the illustrations, the seven pages under "The Present Day" in the chapter on Roads and Bridges.

A generation ago, firstly the bicycle, and latterly, the motor vehicle, brought a return to the roads, which both goods and passenger traffic had abandoned for the railways. The new road-users found that while the highways in or around the towns were of a fairly high standard, nothing like the same conditions prevailed in open country. In fact it was not long before these roads proved quite inadequate to cope with the weight and intensity of the traffic created by the new and increasingly popular methods of transport. Surfaces crumbled, foundations gave way, and later, roads designed to carry the small slow traffic of the coaching days proved inadequate in width and unsafe in design in the face of the large volume of fast traffic which soon

appeared on them. Dust in summer and mud in winter had always been a source of nuisance on water-bound macadam roads where traffic was heavy, and this state of affairs was not only aggravated, but the road surfaces were literally pulled to pieces by the new pneumatic tyres.

Methods of Road Construction

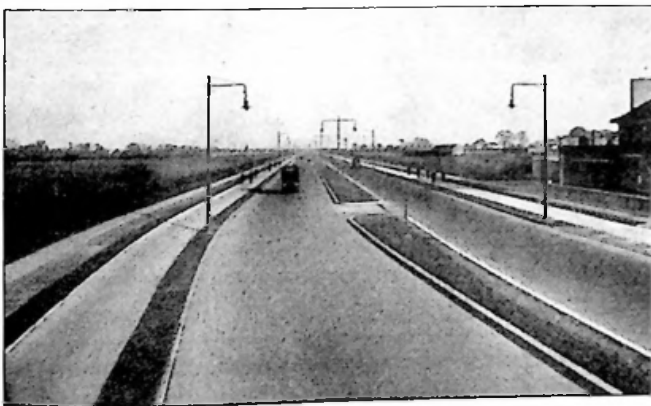
The first attempt to deal with the difficulty consisted in painting the road surface with tar upon which the grit was thrown and rolled in. Later, the type of surface known as tarred macadam, composed of small tarred stones, was laid. Wood, asphalt and granite sett surfaces had been in use for some time in the large cities, and as the need for impervious surfaces became more apparent, their use was greatly extended. Nowadays asphalt and bituminous compounds have become the most popular materials for surfacing important roads, although tarred macadam and concrete running surfaces are also extensively used. The foundations of the old macadam roads consisted of large, tightly-packed stones – the process was known as hand-pitching – and while in some districts with good sub-soils these have been found to stand up to modern traffic conditions, foundations nowadays are usually constructed of concrete, reinforced with steel.

Scheme for Arterial Roads

By far the greatest problem, however, particularly around London, has been the provision and design of roads which would be adequate to cope with the amount of traffic using them. In 1912 the Local Government Board appointed a Departmental Committee to consider what improved means of road communication were necessary for the

metropolis, and, as a result, proposals for constructing new roads, to be called "arterial" roads, were recommended, amongst which the following were planned to pass through Middlesex:

1. THE CAMBRIDGE ROAD was designed to relieve the already serious congestion along the roads running in a northerly direction through the eastern part of the County. It was to commence in Tottenham, run northwards through Edmonton and Enfield and terminate at Wormley in Hertfordshire.
2. THE NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD was planned to relieve London as far as possible of that traffic wishing to cross, rather than enter it, and to intersect and connect every main road converging on London through Middlesex. It was to commence at the junction of the Great West Road and Chiswick High Road, run northwards and eastwards through Chiswick, Acton, Ealing, Wembley, Willesden, Hendon, Finchley, Friern Barnet, Hornsey, Southgate and Edmonton, and pass into Essex at Ilford, via Chingford and Woodford.
3. WESTERN AVENUE was intended as a bye-pass to the London - Oxford Road between Marble Arch and Uxbridge, and was planned to commence just west of the Edgware Road at Paddington, pass through North Hammersmith and enter the County at Old Oak Common Lane, Acton, whence it ran almost due west through Acton, Park Royal, Perivale, Greenford, Northolt and Harefield, to its termination near Denham in Buckinghamshire.
4. THE GREAT WEST ROAD was designed as a bye-pass to Hammersmith Broadway and the High Streets of Chiswick, Brentford and Hounslow, commencing at Cromwell Road, Kensington, and terminating at the Bath Road, west of Hounslow.
5. THE CHERTSEY ROAD was intended to relieve traffic to the south-west, and was planned to commence in the Chiswick High Road and terminate in Middlesex at the River Thames in Shepperton.



Chertsey Road, Feltham

Before any of these proposals could be put in hand, however, War had broken out, and the commencement of the works was postponed until 1920, when the County Council obtained the authority of the Ministry of Transport to the construction of various sections of these roads as a measure of relief against the heavy unemployment which followed the demobilization of the Forces. The Cambridge Road, the North Circular Road and the section of the Great West Road from Hounslow to Chiswick are open to traffic and such has been the growth of motor-car traffic that

schemes are now being prepared and executed for duplicating their carriage-ways and providing them with cycle tracks. Certain sections of the North Circular Road which run along roads already in existence have yet to be widened in order to bring them to their fully-planned width, and parliamentary powers have recently been obtained for the continuation of the Great West Road to its termination in Kensington. Western Avenue has been completed as far as Harefield, and work on the final section, involving the construction of a viaduct some 1600 feet in length over the Colne Valley, is shortly to be commenced. The Chertsey Road, including the building of two new bridges over the Thames at Chiswick and Twickenham has been completed as far as Feltham and land is now being acquired to enable the construction of the final section in Middlesex.

In 1923, the Ministry of Transport authorised two more new roads in the County; the Watford Bye-Pass, which commences at Finchley Road in the Borough of Hampstead, and leaves Middlesex near Aldenham Reservoir, and the Great North Way or Barnet Bye-Pass, which runs from the junction of Archway Road and North Hill, Highgate, to the County boundary about two miles north of Mimms Hall, South Mimms. The purpose of the former is to relieve the congested Edgware Road and that of the latter to relieve the Finchley and Great North Roads.

Safety Measures

Concurrently with the construction of these new roads, extensive schemes for the widening and improvement of most of the old roads, and many of the bridges, of the County to make them equal to their present-day task, have been executed. These have involved the provision of dual-carriageways for up and down traffic, separated by central islands or a grass verge; the provision of service or subsidiary roads parallel with the main carriageways to accommodate local and standing traffic where new development takes place; the construction, where space has permitted, of gyratory traffic layouts (or "roundabouts") at important road junctions or, where it has not, the installation of systems of automatic traffic signals; the provision of super elevation, or banking, on curves to lessen the danger from skidding; and lastly the provision of a multiplicity of traffic signs and road markings to make the highway safe for motorist and pedestrian alike.



Honeyput Lane, Stanmore

On numerous occasions the new roads have been criticised from the point of view of their barren ugliness compared with the leafy lanes of yesterday. The County Council is

making every effort to make its roads as beautiful as they are efficient. Grass verges are laid out at the sides and avenues of young trees and flowering shrubs are planted along them – the County Council having its own nurseries, staffed by horticultural experts, for this purpose. It is regrettable, however, that after so much time, trouble and money have been expended on these improvements, a certain section of the community should be so unappreciative as to involve the Council in additional expenditure each year in repairing thoughtless or wilful damage.

For the purpose of maintaining the County roads directly supervised by the Department, the County is divided into three divisions, the northern, comprising the north-eastern part of the County as far as the Edgware Road; the central, comprising the area between the Edgware Road and the Uxbridge Road; and the southern, which controls the remaining south-west portion of the County. Each of these areas is in charge of a divisional surveyor.

Reinstatement of Work Carried Out by Statutory Undertakers, etc.

Nowadays the citizen in urbanized areas expects to be supplied with all services, such as electricity, gas, water and the disposal of sewage, and in order that these may be obtained as cheaply as possible, Parliament has given to statutory companies who supply these services, the power to lay their mains, cables or sewers under the public highway, placing upon them the responsibility of reinstating or restoring the surface disturbed. In actual practice, these authorities only fill in their trenches with the excavated material, which they consolidate. The highway authorities then restore the surface at the expense of the statutory undertakers, the cost having been previously agreed. This arrangement also relieves the companies of any subsequent liability for accidents which may be caused by settlement along the site of the trench at a later date.

It is fully realised by all authorities concerned that the frequent disturbance of roads by these operations causes a great deal of public annoyance, and although it is sometimes hard to believe, every effort is made to minimize this nuisance. The London Traffic Act 1924, gives power to control a number of important roads in the Metropolitan Police Area, and is of the greatest assistance in this direction. Under this Act, each highway authority submits to the Ministry of Transport six-monthly programmes of work affecting these roads, and these in turn are circulated to all the statutory companies, who are thus able to know in advance when the works are to be executed. They are then able to proceed in advance of the road-works with any proposals that they may desire to carry out. As, under this Act, it is illegal to open these roads for laying mains within twelve months of their being re-surfaced, except in cases of emergency, this may be as much an advantage to the statutory undertakers as to the highway authorities.

Some idea of the magnitude of this work may be obtained from the fact that, on an average, the County Council receives something like £25,000 per annum for the work carried out on behalf of the various bodies which open roads in this manner.

The Town Planning and Restriction of Ribbon Development Acts in relation to highways
Under these Acts, the County Engineer's Department is

concerned, firstly with the prevention of the erection of buildings on land which may be required for future road-widening purposes, and secondly, with ensuring that new developments fronting county roads shall include provision for the accommodation vehicles serving them, so that main road or through traffic will suffer only the minimum of inconvenience.

In its operations under the Town Planning Acts, the County Council ensures that the local authorities' town planning schemes make provision, wherever possible, for all contemplated road widenings, and that the control which the Act gives in respect of the number and position of new streets entering classified roads is suitably exercised.

The spoliation of the countryside by continuous development along road frontages in recent years caused Parliament to pass the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, which gave control to the road authorities over development along frontages of roads, subject to compensation being paid where the developer was adversely affected. Development in Middlesex is not of the character which is met outside the London Traffic Area, as large blocks of back land, as well as main-road frontages, are developed at one time, and except in certain more rural districts, undeveloped frontages are rare.

The administration of this Act, so far as Middlesex is concerned, therefore, is more generally confined to ensuring that building along the main roads does not reduce the safety or efficiency of the existing or future carriageway. The conditions generally imposed by the County Council for this purpose ensure that a subsidiary roadway, known as a service road, shall be constructed along the frontage of shops or houses, outside the limits of any land required for future road widening. This is done as it is felt that the standing vehicles left by persons visiting the shops, or by tradesmen delivering goods to the houses, in effect reduce the useful width of the main-road carriageway to the extent of one line of traffic. If there is any desirable natural feature, such as a line of trees, the service road is frequently set back behind this, in order that the amenities of the road may be preserved as far as possible.

Other Types of Development

Other types of development are dealt with in what is considered to be the most suitable and apt manner. Public-houses, and similar premises of public resort, for example, are required to provide car-parking space, and careful control is exercised to ensure that the entrances to and exits from these spaces are in such positions as to give the minimum of inconvenience to through traffic. The cinema is another type of building which is dealt with in a somewhat similar manner, and it is generally required that a short length of subsidiary road shall be constructed in front, so that cars dropping or picking up passengers at the main entrance may do so without causing obstruction to the main traffic stream.

It is considered that by the judicious use of the powers given under these two Acts, the County Council will be enabled to reduce the cost of future road-widening schemes, since the necessity for the acquisition and demolition of comparatively new buildings should not arise, and to ensure that new developments will not increase danger on the existing highway.

Lobers Ltd - The Aftermath of an Accident

ROGER ATKINSON

One or two readers may recall that we have met Lobers' buses once before in *Newsletter*. It was in No. 43 in an article on anti-German manifestations in the road transport industry in 1914-15. Unlike Northampton, on which the article was centred, and Liverpool with its widespread anti-German rioting following the sinking of the "Lusitania", Accrington had emerged as a more tolerant town.

Wilhelm Hermann Lober was a German, although he had expressed his forenames as William Herman when he registered his company, Lobers Ltd, in March 1913. It had been formed to acquire the business of motor carrier and haulage contractor carried on by Mr Lober in Darwen. He was in Kelly's 1913 Lancashire Directory as "carrier" at 29 Woodville terrace, Darwen. This was still at a period when Kelly's listed the regular carriers from each town, "with inns they call at and days of calling". However, Lober has not been traced as a carrier on a regular service. There is rather unconvincing evidence that he may have been running motor buses as early as 1912. A reader's letter in the "Clitheroe Advertiser & Times" in June 1967 was accompanied by a photograph of a double-deck bus, clearly labelled "Lobers' Services" outside the Sun Inn, Waddington, operating a Clitheroe - Waddington service, (a surprising distance from a Darwen base). The letter-writer dates the picture as "about 1912". (1913 or 1914 seem more likely).

More reliable evidence lies in the company registration papers for Lobers Ltd in March 1913. By then he had at least "a motor charabanc and a lurry". Secondly, he was soon mortgaging himself up to the hilt, to acquire more vehicles. The company, at registration, had capital of £2,000 in £1 shares. 998 were subscribed by William Smith (Junior) an Accrington cotton manufacturer, Lober himself holding the controlling interest with 999 shares. £500 in Preference shares were issued in September 1913, seemingly taken by Smith.

Two months later, in May 1913, Lober secured a loan of £1,000 from A Cronshaw of 31 St Joseph Street West, Darwen. Lober pledged as security "a motor charabanc and a lurry B 5525 and accessories and future earnings" — probably the same vehicles mentioned when the company was registered. Cronshaw was the first of Lober's two backers blessed with a name not unknown to students of the early years of the bus industry. Arthur Cronshaw was probably associated with Blackburn West End Garage Ltd, which some years later, in April 1921, became Lewis Cronshaw Ltd, which ultimately, through various transformations, became Valliant Cronshaw Ltd of Ealing. Lober turned to Cronshaw twice more in rapid succession for loans. In October 1913 he borrowed £400, secured on three motor waggons, and a further £300 in January 1914, secured on B 5525 (as before), W51, X189, steam wagon K1, motor B 2187, motor with charabanc body B 780 and motor CB14. A varied haulage and passenger fleet; and by now substantial debts. B was an early Lancashire registration letter and CB, Blackburn.

The share capital was increased in February 1914 by the

issue of a further £1000 in preference shares, taken up by William Smith (Junior). However, following some transactions in the spring of 1914, the shareholdings, by April, had become:

	Ordinary	Preference
Lober	999	100
Smith	998 *	1400 * presumed
H E Thorpe	1	0

In May 1914, the second significant bus industry name appears. William Benjamin Richardson of Greenway, Walpole Road, Surbiton, Surrey (Gentleman), granted Lobers Ltd £2,000, secured as a mortgage on all the company's property, and Richardson became a director. This was Lober borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. He used most of the money to pay off his debts to Cronshaw, clearing those (£1,000, £300 and £400) on 21 August 1914. W B Richardson had made his fortune — or at least a moderate one — out of leasing his New Central Omnibus Co Ltd, with services in central London and in Bedford, to the London General Omnibus Co Ltd from 1 January 1913. He had then started the Wellingborough Motor Omnibus Co Ltd, a company that was immediately successful and profitable.

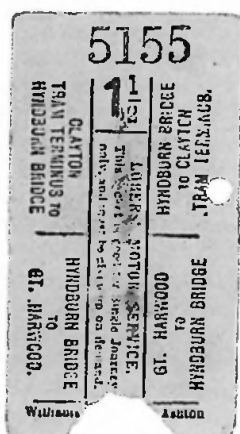
Lober and his wife, Dorothy, had meanwhile moved in November 1913, to live in Withington, Manchester. Who was in charge of the day to day management of Lobers Ltd, now housed in Paradise Old Works, Cannon Street, Accrington is not known. However, the summer of 1914 seems to have been a successful one. In March, Accrington Corporation's Watch & Cemetery Committee had granted Lobers Ltd hackney carriage licences for two motor charabancs to carry 36 and 38 persons respectively, subject to their undertaking not to ply for hire for short journeys within the borough or in competition with the Tramways.

On 27 June 1914, the "Accrington Gazette" carried a photograph of "A 'Lober' Char-a-banc en route to Keswick". Another article in this Newsletter, "Speeding Charabancs", comments that a day tour, in 1922, of 120 miles at a maximum permitted speed of 12 miles per hour would have been 'a marathon'. Accrington to Keswick, via Preston and Kendal, using the roads available in 1914, will have been 83 miles each way. We are not told specifically that it was a day tour, but the picture in the newspaper showed an open charabanc, with — as far as they can be counted — eight rows of seats behind the driver and four passengers per row, plus two more passengers beside the driver. All appear to have been male; almost all wearing cloth caps; no sign of any luggage being carried. Vehicle registration number partly obscured, but could be B5525 — although B5525 was earlier "a lurry". The caption below the picture stated "Messrs. Lobers Ltd. announce their intention of running a series of Excursions during the holidays. Full particulars may be obtained and seats booked at their offices, Cannon Street, Accrington, each evening from 7 to 8.30".

A 166 mile return journey to Keswick, if accomplished in a day, (at a legal 12 m.p.h.), would have been not a marathon, but an absolute epic, even accepting that most

of the roads covered were rated as good in the "Contour Road Book of England", published by Gail & Inglis in 1904. (The 30 miles between Kendal and Keswick had "good surface throughout" but several "dangerous gradients").

In September 1914, an article in "The Helmshore Historian", the magazine of the Helmshore Local History Society, (undated but c.1956), tells us that in May 1914 Haslingden Corporation granted a licence to Messrs. Lobers Ltd of Accrington to run a bus service from Haslingden to Helmshore and back. "The service began on September 7th with the finest looking bus that had been seen in Haslingden, but the service lasted only until the 27th of the month because of the Government's requisitioning of vehicles". The Great War had begun.



Vehicle requisitioning by the War Office was widespread, and it followed very swiftly on the outbreak of war. W B Richardson's name crops up in this context also. He seems to have used his directorship of Lobers Ltd as a channel for a deal, in September 1914, that was financially satisfactory, at any rate to the Wellingborough company, and perhaps to Lobers as well. The Wellingborough company disposed of two of its buses, nominally via Lobers, (but it is likely that they never even came to Accrington), to

the London & South Coast Haulage Co Ltd., which had just had the chassis of four new Daimler saloons requisitioned and was desperate for replacement vehicles.

The general experience of operators was that having vehicles requisitioned was anything but a healthy omen. And indeed the requisitioning of the Haslingden - Helmshore bus set Lobers Ltd on the downward path.

The Observer & Times, [Accrington] Saturday, February 20, 1915

**Motor 'Bus Smash
FULLY LOADED VEHICLE
CRASHES INTO A WALL
Many Pit Workers Injured at Altham
ACCIDENT DESCRIBED BY PASSENGERS**

The Driver's Story

A serious motor 'bus accident in which a number of Accrington and district mine workers were concerned, and attended with serious results, took place at Altham early yesterday morning when miners employed at Messrs. Hargreaves's Calder Pit, Altham, were being conveyed to work.. In

accordance with custom some forty employees at the pit joined one of Messrs. Lober's motor buses at Clayton, to ride to the pit shortly before seven o'clock yesterday morning. The men and a few boys got on the bus in different parts of Clayton, those from the lower end of the township joining it at the canal bridge, while men from Accrington, Church, Oswaldtwistle and other places joined it near the Hare and Hounds Hotel at the bottom of Burnley Road.

The bus, one of the double-deck type, was in charge of John Williams of 25 Tremellen street, Accrington, and all appears to have gone well until nearly opposite Threlfall's Moorside Farm, Altham. The road is on the decline, and at that point there is an awkward turn. Suddenly the passengers felt a jerk, caused by the vehicle striking the kerb, and next minute the 'bus overturned and the side of it crashed on the wall at the side of the road, and the passengers were thrown in all directions. The top part of the bus was smashed to matchwood and half of the wall knocked down, and those who had been inside the bus were buried beneath broken wood and amongst stones and splintered glass.

The alarm was at once given and P.C. Chadwick of Altham was quickly on the scene and rendered assistance to the injured and ambulance men soon arrived from the Calder Pit and Moorfield Pit, and Dr Clegg, Dr Shah and Dr Tennant came and rendered assistance, and ordered the removal of several of the men to Accrington Victoria Hospital. A number of the men, though badly injured pluckily rendered assistance to their more unfortunate comrades who were conveyed to the Hare and Hounds Hotel, and thence to the hospital or to their homes according to the nature of their injuries. Several of the passengers and the driver of the 'bus luckily escaped without a scratch, but all suffered more or less from shock. A number were badly wounded and severely cut by the broken glass and they presented a sorry spectacle. Several of the unfortunate fellows were quite unable to move and gave vent to agonising cries through the pain of broken limbs.

The exact place where the accident occurred is about ten yards beyond the gateway leading to Moorside Farm. The 'bus had crashed into the wall with such force that the top half of the wall was knocked down for a distance of about seven yards. Splinters from the broken bus were scattered in all directions in the adjoining field, and lying all around were men's caps, scarves, tea cans and dinner parcels.

[A detailed list of 20 injured followed]

PASSENGERS INTERVIEWED — SOME THRILLING STORIES

Joseph Jopson of 200 Whalley-road, Clayton-le-Moors, who was one the passengers escaping with only a few slight cuts, stated in an interview that the 'bus left the "Hare and Hounds" corner at 6-50,

and was so full that about nine or ten men had to walk until vehicle got to the top of the hill. There would be at least 40 on the 'bus.. Everything went alright until just past Mr Metcalfe's and opposite Threlfall's Farm and then when the driver would be taking the bend there was a jerk, and the 'bus went clean over. The whole thing happened in a minute. "We were travelling at a brisk rate at the time and I don't know how I have been lucky enough to get off with nothing more than a wrench of the back, because broken glass was flying all directions. I was at the bottom of the 'bus and other men fell on top of me. The 'bus was packed and some were riding on the steps and on the platform at the back and the latter came off worst, Abe Britcliffe, of Oswaldtwistle, having terrible injuries."

[Other 'thrilling stories' followed, for example:]

William Thomas Walker, 16 Dineley-street, Church, stated that he made his way homewards as quickly as he could, and when he went to Dr Harbinson he found that his arm was badly broken at the wrist. He was also damaged internally and had been spitting blood ever since the mishap. "I was riding on the top of the bus" continued Walker "and it was going fast". I landed in the field. When I was pitched off I thought I was never going to come down, but when I did the bump was terrific."

THE DRIVER'S STORY — THINKS THE STEERING GEAR BROKE

When seen at his home yesterday by an "Observer" representative, the driver Mt John Williams of Tremellen-street, Accrington, said the accident occurred on his last journey for the morning. The usual arrangement is to travel from Clayton to Great Harwood, back to Clayton, from Clayton to Martholme pit, back to Clayton and from Clayton to Altham and back.

"I started off on this journey at about twenty-five minutes to seven" he said. "There would be about forty on the 'bus, all colliers going to their work, and they were accommodated, I think, fairly evenly inside and outside. All went well until we were down on the Altham road. How the accident happened, I don't know. As far as I can see, the steering gear broke suddenly, as I was taking the curve to the right. The 'bus went straight on over the kerb and hit the wall at an angle. The stone was ripped away for yards. Then the bus overturned to the left on the wall.

"I found myself in the same seat, and beyond the shaking, uninjured. I crawled through a hole in the wall. Three passengers who were with me were not hurt either, How the others went on I could not see for the moment. Some had gone right over the wall — those who were on the top and at the back, I think. Luckily they fell in a field. The body of the 'bus was smashed and the glass had gone, of course, and some of the men were pinned under the debris. One man was quite fastened up near me, but he was quite uninjured when we got him out. The conductor had his arm broken. "I got on the

telephone and rang up the police. Dr. Clegg sent the ambulance, but I don't think it took any of the men. We got them away on milk floats and flat carts as soon as possible.

The other Accrington newspaper, the "Gazette", likewise reported the accident in its issue of February 20, 1915; but more briefly and not so dramatically. Only one new point emerged in the "Gazette", namely that the road to Altham was "in a soft condition". On a matter of detail, the "Gazette" reported that "Dr Clegg and several other doctors were soon on the spot attending to the injured men, who were sent home in farmers' carts and in the ambulance van".

There are several facets both of the accident itself and of the newspaper reports that emphasise the pace of change in the last 90 – 100 years. Some of the miners who boarded the bus at the Hare and Hounds (at Clayton-le-Moors) had presumably had to walk to that point from as far away as Oswaldtwistle to board the bus at 6.35 a.m. The police were known to enforce motor vehicle speed limits and rudimentary safety standards, but targeting an overloaded miners' bus on a cold winter's morning may have been something to which a blind eye was turned. On the other hand, it was doctors, not police and paramedics, who in person attended the scene of the accident and looked after the injured in a muddy field. Then, their patients who were fit to walk home presumably did so.

.....

With a smart, new bus requisitioned at the end of September 1914, and the virtual destruction of another bus in the accident at Altham in February 1915, it is not surprising that, in March 1915, a Liquidator was appointed at the behest of the creditor, William Benjamin Richardson. However, the Liquidator was persuaded to permit the creation of a new company, Lobers (1915) Ltd, on 27 May 1915, with its registered office at Paradise Old Works, with William Herman Lober as sole director and W H and Dorothy Lober as shareholders with one share each.

The Liquidator produced an account for the period 24 February to 19 August 1915 (spanning both companies and starting a few weeks before liquidation). £2674.12.2 was realised from sale of assets and collection of debts. The significant items of expenditure included:

Repayment of Richardson's debenture	2,000	0	0
With interest	70	0	0
Wages	60	0	1
Anglo-American Oil Co	68	2	2
National Insurance stamps	3	4	9
Inland Revenue	6	18	8
Garnistion claim for injuries and costs	15	3	4
Miscellaneous	14	4	6
	<hr/>		
	£2237	13	6

Lobers (1915 Ltd was subsequently wound up on the petition of William Smith (Junior). Mr Smith received only £108.19.2

Three points to wind up this rather sad tale of an omnibus, charabanc and cartage pioneer. Firstly, W B Richardson

suffered no loss at all. Secondly, Garniston (who received £15.3.4) was the conductor who had his arm broken. There is no indication in this Liquidator's account of any compensation to anyone else. The accident happened on Friday 19 February; the Liquidator's account covers the period from Wednesday 24 February. Do we really assume that all the injured put in their claims over the weekend (and the doctors their bills, as well) and that all

claims were settled and paid by the Tuesday? Or is it, that apart from Garniston, no one received any compensation or recompense at all?

The final and quite separate point is that anti-German agitation appears to have played not the slightest part in Mr Lober's downfall. Why was Accrington so tolerant in autumn 1914 / spring 1915, and Northampton so vicious?

Book Reviews

A HISTORY OF OK MOTOR SERVICES

David Holding
Bus Enthusiast Publishing
ISBN 978-0-946265-39-8
Flexiback 96 pages 170x235mm £13.95

The author has written a concise scholarly history of this much respected and fondly remembered County Durham independent operator. The clearly presented text in the three column format is profusely illustrated with over 120 photographs of which commendably half are in colour. Of the six chapters, five deal chronologically with the development of the company from its humble beginnings in 1912 to its sale to the Go-Ahead Group in 1995. The final chapter gives a review of the fleet including its absorption by Go-Ahead.

The first chapter gives a fascinating insight into the Emmerson family, three generations of which feature in the history; Grandfather, Father and Son were all named Wade Emmerson and so for clarity they are referred to as Wade Emmerson senior, junior and young Wade respectively. Many nostalgic operator names (Anderson, Bond- Chamberlain, Dark, Lockey and Rawe etc.) appear as the colourful rivalry unfolds between pioneer operators in the Bishop Auckland area during the roaring twenties. All this activity of course did not go un-noticed by United. The second chapter starts with the implications of the 1930 Road Traffic Act and outlines the licences obtained both by Wade Emmerson and those of his competitors as stability is restored to the area. Business growth is achieved by the buying out of some of these competitors. At the outbreak of war in 1939, such is the standing of the firm that Mr. Wade, the traffic manager, is given the task of co-ordinating the works transport to Catterick Camp and other military establishments. The chapter ends with the formation of the Limited Company and the subsequent enthusiastic development of tour and private hire work.

Chapter three heralds the start of a new era and Wade Emmerson junior lost no time in inviting Charles Marshall to be his personal assistant. Under new management much broader horizons were sought with rural tourism and move to Tyneside. The businesses of Cosy Coaches and Lockeys were added to the portfolio.

The ramifications of deregulation and the resultant boom years feature in the fourth chapter. In the final chronological chapter storm clouds gather, leading to the eventual sale of the company to the Go-Ahead group.

The fleet is dealt with in the final chapter with both text and photographs covering some thirty pages. Your reviewer however disagrees with the author's claim that it would have been pointless to have included a fleet list. Whilst appreciating the difficulties of dealing with the 600 plus vehicles which were operated over the years in a limited amount of space, perhaps abridged sections of the fleet could have been presented in bite-sized portions at relevant places throughout the text.

Some aspects of the company history are not covered. Considering the importance of ticketing both for revenue protection and as a means of compiling statistical data, a solitary photograph of two tickets disappointed this reviewer. The book could also have been enhanced by the inclusion of route maps, original time and fare tables as well as other publicity material; but these small points are entirely personal.

In conclusion there is no doubt whatsoever that this book will give an immense amount of pleasure both to former staff and passengers of OK as well as to the many enthusiasts who have waited patiently for its publication. Judging by the way copies were avidly snapped up at its launch I would recommend any potential purchaser to order their copy without delay.

PC.

THE NANTWICH & CREWE MOTOR BUS CO LTD

Ken Swallow P11 - in a series published by the Omnibus Society (PHRG).

This 12-page A4 booklet in a soft cover has been published by the Omnibus Society (Provincial Historical Research Group), and it has been distributed by its author, our member, Ken Swallow, to some relevant local history sources, with this note:

This account of the Nantwich & Crewe Motor Bus Company was produced by the Omnibus Society in its series of members' research papers. The aim in exposing it in this form is to solicit comment and further information from Society members that may enhance its value. It is with a similar intention, aimed at local historians, that this copy is deposited here.

The author would welcome comment at ken.swallow@virgin.net

Enquiries to the Omnibus Society are invited to visit its web site at www.omnibussoc.org October 2007

On this basis, it is both recommended and offered to

R&RTHA members, as well. However, as this series of P-numbered publications are normally only for release to OS members, there are 'special arrangements' for R&RTHA members to buy it. They should order it from Wilf Dodds, 3 Beaconsfield Court, Leicester Road, Nuneaton CV11 6AE. They must state that they are not OS members. The price is £2-00 post free; cheques payable to PHRG.

Now, after all those preliminaries, why do I strongly recommend it? The primary reason being that it is research in progress. So often, potential authors aver that they have not yet established the full facts and so cannot publish anything at this stage; and then they never do. Whereas to publish something - in this *Newsletter* for example; or as a booklet as the OS has done with Nantwich & Crewe - when an outline story has been developed, is much better than never putting pen to paper at all. Secondly, it is an already good and interesting work. Thirdly, it gives clues to the kind of local sources that can be fairly readily explored by other researchers into the history of operators, freight as well as passenger, in their own localities. Finally, the price is very reasonable.

RA

CAMBRIDGE 2

Paul Carter

Venture Publications Ltd - Volume twelve in the Super Prestige Collection
ISBN 1905 304 153 175pp, fully illustrated,
2007, £17-95

Cambridge 2 covers the period from 1950 to 1986. It follows the same pattern as Cambridge 1, published in 2004, (not reviewed in *Newsletter*), which covered public road transport in the Cambridge area up to 1950. Cambridge 1 was a very satisfying and interesting book. Cambridge 2 is a worthy book, but it embraces a period where more and more happens and, given the style of universal coverage attempted, has to jump from one topic to another.

It succeeds in covering social history, from the closure of cinemas and dance hall in the 1950s, through the decline of traffic to the east coast resorts in the 1970s, to development of services to the airports, particularly Stansted. It deals with a wealth of detail on vehicles, their manufacturers, their liveries, their seating capacities, their engines and their performance. It brings in at the correct chronological points, Dr Beeching and railway abandonments, one-person-operation and stand-by fares on National Express. It looks at the infrastructure - the rebuilding of Drummer Street Bus Station. It details umpteen route changes by the very numerous operators serving not only Cambridge, but the whole of the surrounding area. The succession of the Tilling group, the National Bus Company and its privatization are all covered. The development and, in some case, demise of many independent bus and coach operators are chronicled. Management methods are discussed. Employee reminiscences - some very interesting - are brought in, at intervals. Works services to Pye, early Park & Ride facilities and premature and unsuccessful ventures with City Tours in Cambridge are mentioned. Indeed, what facet can there be that has not been covered somewhere in this book?

The book has an index, and is chronologically arranged, so it is a good work of reference. If you know Cambridge well and have a fondness for the period 1950 to 1986, then this is an absolute 'must' for you to buy.

If your knowledge of Cambridge and Cambridgeshire and the bus and coach operators is more casual, then it is a worthy book, but not one to attempt to devour from cover to cover at one reading. Read it bit by bit and use it to refer to when required.

RA

ROSSENDALE TRANSPORT

- A Centenary Celebration 1907-2007

by Harry Postlethwaite

Venture Publications Ltd, Glossop

ISBN 13-978-1-905304-19-6 176 pages, illustrated £17.95

The three small Lancashire cotton towns of Rawtenstall, Haslingden and Ramsbottom were always surrounded by bigger towns and cities - Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley to the north, Rochdale, Bury and Bolton to the south. Inevitably this affected the way they developed their transport systems, but this comprehensive account of their municipal transport systems suggests they have always been ready to punch above their weight.

Between them they account for one of the earliest trolleybus systems (1913), the last regular steam tramway in Britain, and the last survivor of the many municipally owned transport undertakings in Lancashire (if you exclude Blackpool, which is now a unitary authority).

It all began with the Accrington Steam Tramways Company, which ran south through Haslingden to Rawtenstall, and subsequently linked up with the Rossendale Steam Tramways Company, that continued the link through to Bacup.

In 1906 Haslingden Corporation acquired the section of the steam tramway within its borough. Two years later Rawtenstall and Bacup councils took over the Rossendale Steam Tramways and set about electrifying the system. The steam trams continued until July 1909, the last in regular operation in the country.

Haslingden Corporation started a bus service in 1908, but it was not a success and was abandoned the following year. There was a small new beginning after World War I, but it was only in the mid-twenties that buses began to figure significantly in Haslingden's municipal operation. It was the first town in the area to decide to abandon its trams, and they gave way entirely to the motor bus in 1930.

Rawtenstall tried a bus service in 1907 but it too did not last, and the corporation did not run buses again until 1924. Its trams stayed kept on running until 1932.

Ramsbottom Urban District Council looked into running electric trams, but when it realised this would involve the costly business of rebuilding a bridge, reconstructing a road, and removing a level crossing, this was abandoned. Discussions with neighbouring Bury about possible extension of its tramlines to form a loop through

Ramsbottom proved fruitless, so the UDC opted instead for railless traction, trolleybuses in modern parlance. Unfortunately vibration on the town's granite setts proved too much for the vehicles' bodies, which had to be replaced after two years. Ramsbottom's first buses appeared in 1924; two years later they replaced the trolleybuses altogether.

All three municipalities expanded their bus fleets up to and after World War II, naturally opting for Lancashire-built vehicles from Leyland - first Lion saloons, and later Titan double decks. Ramsbottom UDC bought its first double decks in 1947.

But come the 1960s the constraints and regulatory changes that affected bus operations across the country began to bite here too. Haslingden and Rawtenstall, which had shared a general manager since 1949, combined their two concerns into the Rossendale Joint Transport Committee. Ramsbottom decided not to join them, but was absorbed the following year into SELNEC - the South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire Passenger Transport Executive.

Successive changes in government policy led the Rossendale JTC to transform itself in 1974 to Rossendale Borough Transport and 1986 to Rossendale Transport Ltd, now the last municipally owned bus company in Lancashire (apart of course from Blackpool).

Today's Rossendale Transport faces a far more competitive environment than did the old municipal operators, but Harry Postlethwaite recounts a number of occasions on which it has bested its much bigger rivals, like GM Transport, by moving outside its original geographical limits, by providing a more reliable service, and by better meeting passengers' needs. In the process it has expanded its fleet of buses rather than contracting it.

Not only does Rossendale Transport give a comprehensive history of municipal transport operations in these Lancashire boroughs. More than half the 176 pages are devoted to a wealth of photographs, some in colour showing the varied liveries of modern times. For the vehicle enthusiast there are fleet lists of all three municipal operators and the successive Rossendale concerns.

This book is no. 16 in Venture Publications' Super Prestige Collection of Transport History Albums.

Andrew Waller

SHEFFIELD UNITED TOURS – A brief history

by Trevor Weckert

Venture Publications Ltd, Glossop

ISBN 978-1-90530-414-1

64 pages, illustrated £9.95

Sheffield United Tours was part of the BET group, but by its very nature it had a more human touch than most bus and coach operators controlled by the big groupings. Its service was so personal that customers came back year after year, often selecting their tour on the basis of which courier was leading them.

Back in the 1950s its red and grey coaches, with their striking Windover Kingsway bodies, were a familiar sight across the country. They could even be seen in far away Bournemouth, on hire to the local operator on days when their regulars were sunning themselves on the beach, but the most popular destination was nearer at hand, Blackpool.

Trevor Weckert gives a lively account of how SUT grew from a relatively modest acquisition by the Yorkshire Traction Co Ltd at the end of 1934, that of Arthur Kitson's coaching business. The company promptly resold half its share to fellow BET concern East Midland Motor Services Ltd. Another five independents were absorbed in the next few months and the title Sheffield United Tours was adopted in March 1935.

Neither Yorkshire Traction nor East Midland was based in Sheffield, although both ran bus services into the city from other towns. This was also the case for the North Western Road Car Co Ltd, which argued successfully that it too should have a share of the cake. In the 1930s tours continued to run under the banner of Hancock's Motor Tours, one of the acquired operators, whilst the title United Motor Services was used for express services and excursions. It was only after World War II that all operations were marketed as Sheffield United Tours.

By the end of the decade another three independents had been acquired. Despite the outbreak of war in 1939, the tours and excursions programme continued much as before for one more season. Heavy air raids in 1941 abruptly put paid to that, and many of SUT's vehicles were requisitioned by the military. As industry was geared more and more to military needs, other coaches made their contribution to the war effort by ferrying workmen to and from factories.

When peace came in 1945 those coaches that remained, or could be reacquired, were sorely in need of repair. New vehicles were hard to come by for several years yet, and the old ones had to be patched up to keep the wheels turning. Express services started up once more, modestly at first - to Blackpool, Morecambe and Southport, and to Scarborough, Skegness and Cleethorpes. In the days before mass car ownership the coaching business soon picked up, and, as the austerity of the war years receded, SUT expanded into continental tours in 1949. That was the year that Benjamin Goodfellow became General Manager. He it was, together with Chief Engineer Ron Burgin, that put SUT firmly on the map. Its drivers were always smartly turned out, and many regarded the company like a family firm.

Between 1953 and 1967 SUT absorbed another seven independent coach companies. Weckert's account reflects the energy and innovation that SUT displayed. It gave an annual Reunion Ball for its staff and patrons, each year with a different theme. When Hungarian refugees poured across the border into Austria after Soviet troops invaded their country in 1956, SUT sent coaches to Vienna to bring 250 of them to England.

SUT favoured AEC chassis, and invested in distinctive bodywork for its coaches, like the Windover Kingsway and the Burlingham Seagull. In 1958 Goodfellow and

Burgin wanted coaches with larger windows; Burlingham did not like the idea, so they turned to Plaxton. When this firm came up with a new design to meet their requirements, Goodfellow offered a prize to the employee who suggested the best name for it. John Otter, an electrician, suggested "Panorama" and won the £5 prize. Today he could be rated as a successful image maker and command a fat consultant's fee.

With hindsight it is clear that the writing was on the wall for SUT when the National Bus Company absorbed BET's bus interests in 1969. Three years later Sheffield United Tours took their last delivery of new coaches in the distinctive red and grey. The title was still applied for a couple more years on coaches in NBC's unremarkable white livery, only to be replaced in 1975 by "North East", and then just "East".

This book, no. 37 in Venture Publications' Prestige Series, is copiously illustrated, with two thirds of the pages given over to photographs, with the standard of reproduction that enthusiasts have come to expect from this publisher. Those with a special interest in vehicles might have liked a summary fleet list, but many readers will find the lack of this more than adequately compensated by the way in which Weckert has set his brief history in its social context.

Andrew Waller

CQB, THE STORY OF A NORTH-EAST ENGLAND PARISH

By K L Turns, published by GWASG GFT, Buttington, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 8SX, Cymru. ISBN 978-1-898969-01-3, price £7.95 plus postage. Fully illustrated with black and white photographs, line drawings and a map.

Transport history emerges in some unlikely places and by some tortuous routes. The story of a Church of England parish in industrial County Durham might not be expected to offer much. But the parish of Cassop cum Quarrington with Bowburn lies in territory served by a variety of independent operators as well as by United Automobile, and the development of these services is described in some detail. A useful table compares public transport available from Bowburn in 1977 with the situation in 2006; of the 49 places served formerly, 20 had been lost by 2006, 19 had slower journeys and ten had faster.

Also described are the bus operations by the parish itself, at first with an ex-Northern General Guy half-cab single deck. The bus was bought to expand youth activities to holidays, trips out and educational visits, but although it was made available for what the author describes as "a pittance", it was on slave (worn-out) tyres because NGT, like many large operators, hired its tyres under a mileage contract. The author describes the way in which new and recut tyres were found, but then the vicar had to gain an appropriate licence to drive it. The bus became so much a part of parish life that when a new church was planned in 1963, a "coach garage" was incorporated in its design. An ECW-bodied Bristol half-cab replaced the Guy, and in 1964 an AEC Regent was added. New to Liverpool as a double-deck in 1942, it was rebodied by Burlingham

in 1953 as a single deck for local operator J J Baker of Quarrington Hill. Taken over by Gillett's, it passed to the parish.

In many ways this book is comparable with one of Keith Turns' earlier books, "An Ephemeral Flash", a history of public transport in and around the Upper Wansbeck Valley in Northumberland. Published in April 1994, this recounts the author's fascination with public transport and his passing the PSV driving test while still a student. He also worked as a conductor in vacation time for Venture Transport (Newcastle). He then joined Sunderland Corporation's planning department in 1971 and moved to Durham County Council's public transport team in 1974. In September 1977 he bought the bus operation of J Batty & Co in the Wansbeck Valley, at first using his wife's name, as he was until May 1978 still employed by Durham County Council. J Batty & Co evolved into Tower Transit and was finally taken over by Vasey's Coaches of Otterburn in 1983. Thus far the two books are comparable; there are tables of population and service frequencies over the years, for instance. The strikingly noticeable difference is that while the 1994 book records many struggles and some critical commentary, it remains an objective account. The new book seeks to apportion blame, in terms of transport, local government and the church. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Lord Ridley, and their adviser John Hibbs all come in for attack, and he lays blame for the reduction in public transport firmly at their door. Similarly he attacks Durham County Council for its Category D policy which resulted in declining industrial areas being "left to rot" with minimal investment. But he reserves his most powerful strictures for Dr David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham 1984-94, particularly for his alleged attitude towards people who did not want to accept the ordination of women as priests in the Church of England. The closure in 2004 of the parish church at Bowburn, complete with its coach garage, he sees as a part of this. Somehow one feels that we haven't got the whole of the story here. John Hibbs wrote the preface to his 1994 book and was thanked for doing so; now he is blamed for the way that buses have been operating since 1986. By April 1994 the ordination of women was well under way and Dr Jenkins was heading into retirement. Keith Turns himself, who was made deacon in 1971, had become curate of a parish in the Exeter diocese in 1984, though he now describes himself as no longer a member of the Church of England. So why is the attitude so different?

His criticisms are best answered by published books: John Hibbs' views are set out in his "Transport Economics and Policy" (Kogan Page, 2003) and the Rt Rev Dr David Jenkins' views and experiences are given in his "The Calling of a Cuckoo" (Continuum, London and New York, 2002). For the reader prepared to make a critical assessment of the material, there is a great deal of transport interest in Keith Turns' new book. But I leave the last word to the Roman Catholic scholar Adrian Hastings; in his carefully and sensitively balanced "A History of English Christianity, 1920-2000" he says that "the closure of churches was just part of a much vaster pattern of structural dismemberment." The positive point that Keith Turns, perhaps unwittingly, makes, is that in such a time of change, buses have proved remarkably resilient.

Ian Armour Yearsley

Book Notice

A-Z OF BRITISH COACHBUILDERS 1919-1960

Revised and enlarged edition

Nick Walker

Herridge & Sons Ltd, Shebbear

ISBN 978-0-9549981-6-5 222pp, illustrated, 2007, £35

There is a significant cross-over in coachbuilding between builders of car bodies and commercial vehicle and psv bodybuilders, so that this book, although primarily aimed at car enthusiasts, has much to offer the bus and commercial vehicle historian, not least in providing the wider context of the coachbuilding industry. There are no general rules to be drawn about transition from one type of vehicle to another: some psv bodybuilders may have begun with car bodies, others who were principally car bodybuilders diversified with psv bodies when times

were hard. The following list, which does not aim at comprehensiveness, is of (some) of those to be found in this book who bodied both cars and buses or coaches: Abbott, Beadle, Duple, Gill All-Weather, Grose, Gurney Nutting, Harrington Holbrook, Lincolnshire & District, Mann Egerton Arthur Muliiner, Northern Counties, Plaxton, R.E.A.L., Strachan & Brown and Windover. The book, which is superbly illustrated, has a number of introductory chapters, followed by the main body of the text, with coachbuilder entries alphabetically arranged. It concludes with two series of entries additional to the first edition of 1997, pre- and post-World War 2. Access to the three listings and mentions in the text is facilitated by a single, comprehensive index.

Richard Storey

Transport in Ireland in the 1930s ~ a brief survey

ROGER ATKINSON

Behind the picture on the front page of this Newsletter there lies a story with political implications that have their parallel at the present day. The argument that those in governmental authority – using that as a very wide term – are the best people to judge the need for transport services and to arrange and control their provision, became widely accepted seventy or eighty years ago. Its accompanying tenet, that competition was wasteful, likewise prevailed in high places. This applied not only to competition between road and rail; it applied within the fields of both freight and passenger road transport, and to competition between bus and tram, or between independents and established bus operators. Competition was “wasteful” or “unnecessary”. But those pro-regulation (and pro-monopoly) arguments eventually went out of fashion. But now, in 2007, they are finding favour again, if forecasts of the contents of a forthcoming Transport Bill in Parliament at Westminster are accurate. A brief glance at the application of these philosophies to road transport in the two segments of Ireland just over seventy years ago will perhaps be of interest. Events in Ireland followed a timescale allied to that in the United Kingdom, but with differences of detail.

Ireland had been partitioned into two states in the period 1920-22, with the Irish Free State (IFS), governed by the Dail in Dublin, coming formally into existence in December 1922. A Government of Northern Ireland had been created by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, but with certain legislative and fiscal powers reserved to the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Indeed, in one facet of the process of bringing “wasteful competition” under control, the IFS was about a year ahead of the UK. The Dail passed a Railways (Road Motor Services) Act in 1927, whereas it was not until 1928 that the four main line railways obtained equivalent powers in the UK. The Great Southern Railways (GSR) swiftly began to implement the IFS Act. It made an agreement with the Irish Omnibus Company (IOC). From

July 1927, the IOC operated bus services as contractor to the railway company with buses bearing the IOC name, but also specifically designated “Great Southern Railways Service”. (Some were services that had already been established by the railway company). A territorial agreement was reached between the GSR and the Great Northern Railways (Ireland) (GNR (I)) in 1932. On January 1934, the GSR took over the IOC, which was then wound up.

Meanwhile, the Dail had enacted in 1932 a Road Transport Act, broadly equivalent to the UK Road Traffic Act of 1930, imposing government regulation on bus operators and services. But in 1933, a very much more drastic Road Transport Act had followed. This empowered the Dublin United Tramways Co (1896) Ltd, the GSR and the GNR (I), to compulsorily acquire competing independent operators. The Dublin situation paralleled the formation and compulsorily purchase powers of the London Passenger Transport Board on 1 July 1933, but it differed in not creating a new Board, but vesting the powers in the existing dominant Dublin operator. And there were neither an underground railway system nor municipal tramways to be absorbed in Dublin.

In Northern Ireland, The Government asked Sir Felix J C Pole, a former General Manager of the Great Western Railway, to conduct an enquiry and report back, on the transport situation in that province. Sir Felix launched his enquiry on 1 April 1934 and reported on 23 July, 1934 – a timescale incredible in 2007. The report recommended the creation of a road transport board, embracing both passenger and freight operations. The proposed Board would have powers of compulsory acquisition. It recommended that the undertaking of the Belfast Corporation Tramways & Omnibus Department should be taken over, as well as all privately-owned concerns. The Board should comprise only a small number of persons, including representatives of the railways, of the Belfast Omnibus Co Ltd and H M S Catherwood Ltd, as well as

Belfast Corporation. Problems arose with cross-border operations, particularly those of the GNR (I), (based in Dublin).

The Northern Ireland Road Transport Board was duly created under the Road and Rail Transport (Northern Ireland) Act, 1935, but it did not bring in the Belfast Corporation undertaking, nor a handful of other exemptions, primarily cross-border operators, for example the bus operations of the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway Company. The main operators, including the substantial bus operations of the Northern Counties Committee of the London, Midland & Scottish Railway, were absorbed from the NIRTB's inaugural day, 1 October 1935, and other bus operators were acquired over the next three months.

Cross-border operations had already presented a problem to the Irish Free State government when enacting its 1933 Road Transport Act. H M S Catherwood Ltd, a Northern Ireland-based company had operated bus and coach

services south of the border. The IFS 1933 Road Transport Act therefore required the Catherwood company, by then a Thomas Tilling Ltd subsidiary, to transfer 27 buses to the GNR(I). The Catherwood company duly complied.

Turning back to the GNR(I) bus illustrated on the front page of Newsletter, and with the background given above, one or two more points can be detected. After the railways in the IFS had received bus-operating powers, the GNR(I) established, in January 1929, a one-bus operation between Drogheda station and town. In February, the operations of Francis Duffy between Dublin, Drogheda and Dundalk were taken over. This is where bus No.2, (the fleet number of the bus illustrated) appears to come in. Its route board shows it to be for the Dublin – Drogheda – Dundalk service; so, it is likely that it was put into service soon after the acquisition of Mr Duffy's business. Thus, a good early illustration of a legally authorised railway bus operation in Ireland

RA

Coaching on the Kent & Sussex Borders

EXTRACT FROM CHRIS SALAMAN'S MEMOIRS

Whilst reading the recent article on East Kent memoirs, it made me recall my own early days in passenger transport in this region of south east England. Although originally trained and working with London Transport, we worked a seven day shift with a resulting three or four day rest day period, which enabled me to return to my home town of Royal Tunbridge Wells on the Kent and Sussex borders. Officially LT did stipulate that whilst working in their employ one was not allowed to work for other operators (so that no driving hours were contravened). But since it was a fairly lengthy time period. I unofficially elected to offer my services to my local coach operator who had been based in Tunbridge Wells since the First War.

Thus it was that driver (badge No.N82808). apprehensively reported to the premises of Harry Gilbert in High Brooms (a suburb of Tunbridge Wells) not knowing what was to be asked of me. I knew that he had an ageing fleet of luxury coaches, but was thrilled to note on arrival that many of these were of pre-war origin and comprised half-cab AEC Regals, Leyland Tiger, Dennis Lancet, and a half dozen Bedfords ranging from WTBs to SBs.

The garage looked empty of staff as I stood awaiting someone to appear. Suddenly a voice spoke from beyond and a figure appeared in the form of leading driver Fred Cheeseman, a stoutish man of middle years sporting a full head of hair. After an initial informal chat he asked me to hop into one of the newest vehicles, the Duple-bodied SB, and go out for a little test drive which Fred was most pleased with. On return to the garage, a welcome cup of tea was at hand and I enquired when I would actually be required for any work, Fred replied almost instantaneously that if I liked I could do a little afternoon job that same day, for the local Womens' Institute, an afternoon Spring Blossom tour with a stop for tea thrown in; and that I should use the SB for this job.

Now I should point out at this stage that this was the newest vehicle in the fleet, dating from 1951 and bought second-hand by Harry a few years previously. It was in nice condition with a 37-seat body and powered by a Bedford 300cu.in. petrol engine. I soon discovered that it took quite a time to get up to its maximum speed of well over forty miles an hour, but that stopping at this speed

with vacuum servo brakes was a another matter altogether! As this was the mid-sixties, Harry's fleet was already somewhat dated!

Gilbert's Luxury Coaches were painted in a delightful two-tone blue with gold lettering, and when cleaned and polished, looked remarkably smart for their age.





Maintenance was 'in-house' with fellow leading driver George Akehurst, a chap of similar age group to Fred, but featuring sharp facial features and thinning swept back greyish hair, doing much of the basic servicing 'as and when' required. The main garage at High Brooms was capable of housing four coaches and had two excellent inspection pits for maintenance checks. All the petrol-powered vehicles were fuelled from the business's own fuel pump which had a very inaccurate gauge! (This proved very convenient from my point of view when after a few months working for the company, both Fred and George allowed me to fill my van with running expenses!!).

So it was that I arrived at my first job pick-up point and was greeted by a host of elderly females eagerly awaiting their afternoon's transport. After introducing myself, the leader of my party hastily boarded my coach followed by the rest of the group, whereupon I was given the afternoon's itinerary. Now this I was a little apprehensive of, as it involved negotiating some very narrow lanes in the Under River region between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks amongst the wooded slopes of the Weald of Kent. So off we set and not long after we turned off the beaten track and headed deep into the heart of unspoilt countryside. Every corner we turned, my heart was in my mouth for fear of meeting another large vehicle head-on. Suddenly on dropping down a steep incline my eyes focused on the distant horizon where I could see the narrow lane meandering its way beyond, when to my horror my worst fears were realised. There, some way ahead, was a large farm tractor pulling a heavily laden trailer of hay towards us! As we were still some way from this obstacle. I started hastily to seek out a suitable passing place. Nothing seemed to appear as we got closer and closer to this obstruction when finally on rounding a particularly sharp bend, we suddenly found ourselves face to face! One of us would obviously have to reverse - but who? Although I had the larger vehicle, mine would be the easier of the two to back up - but for how far? Needless to say after much thinking I eventually reversed back for what seemed like ages until I found a field gateway that I had missed earlier! In due course, the ladies rewarded me with a delicious cream tea, so it was well worth all the aggravation experienced at the start of the afternoon's travel.

On about my third visit to do some part-time driving. I

was standing in the garage awaiting the arrival of either Fred or George, when the door opened and a rather elderly gentleman entered and on seeing me standing doing nothing, immediately told me to grab a broom and brush up the corner of the garage! This was my initial meeting with Harry Gilbert in person. He had started the business just after the First War when like

so many other entrepreneurial drivers, he had bought an old second-hand Ford model 'T' flat-bed that during the daylight hours had a lift-on body with seating bodywork, whilst at night it reverted to a flat-bed carrying produce to Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market in London. From this small beginning he had become the only coach operator in Tunbridge Wells and stayed so for many years, the nearest competition being Ashline in Tonbridge and Warrens in nearby Ticehurst, both the latter having similar origins. Now well past retiring age, he still took an active part in the day to day running of the business and I soon got to know and respect him for who he was.

From then on I did many small 'private hire' jobs. but it was the regular school contract work that provided the daily guaranteed 'bread and butter' money. His main school contract job was for Kent College at Pembury, just outside Tunbridge Wells, where every day, three coaches would collect day pupils from the town's central bus stops and convey them on the three mile journey to the College, one of the country's leading independent girls' schools, returning at the end of day's schooling in late afternoon. Now, for the uninitiated, I should point out at this point, that one would expect a high standard of behaviour and deportment from girls receiving this expensive education. Don't you believe it! Warned I had been to expect the unexpected, and true enough within a few weeks of my first school contract job, I experienced the first example of my charges unexpected and unruly behaviour. The back end of any PSV always attracts the less well behaved element of society, as momentarily I gazed in my rear view mirror and there, hanging out of one of the rear windows was a pair of navy blue underwear! I glanced twice not believing what I had first time seen. and on the second glance stared a little longer at my own misfortune. As my eyes returned to looking ahead, I suddenly found ourselves driving completely on the wrong side of the road, necessitating immediate action on my behalf to avoid hitting oncoming traffic, much to the delight of my passengers, who roared in fits of uncontrollable giggles and laughter.

It wasn't long before I reported for a day's work and found myself being allocated to one of the older vehicles in the fleet resulting in my skills of double-declutching being brought to the fore. The vehicle in question was a pre-war Dennis half-cab 35-seater that was considerably slower to manipulate than the lighter Bedfords. This was

allocated to a school contract job, and in this case being a half-cab gave the driver complete immunity from the saloon seating area - thus no physical contact with passengers. I did of course have to climb in and out of the cab to open and close the entrance/exit door. The speed of this much older and heavier coach took some getting used to, particularly as one had to take far more care in anticipating turns and other similar manoeuvres. There was no power steering, so in theory the slower you went, the heavier the actual steering became. This could prove to be a headache in urban areas where much turning was necessary as did gear changing with double-declutching between every change. But all in all I got to love the feel of these elderly motors, and sadly it was not long after my initial employment that Harry decided to sell off all the pre-War fleet. I was at first bitterly disappointed to hear this decision, but then out of the blue he asked me whether I might care to purchase one of them myself. Before I had time to reply he informed me that I could have any of them for £50 each - CASH only! The temptation was enormous, but where was I going to park a large commercial of this size? I thought long and hard, and having already acquired a pre-war Austin 18 ambulance which I had parked at the back of my father's house, I considered asking him whether I might add to my collection. It did seem a liberty, but waiting for the opportune moment would seem the sensible option. And thus it was that I acquired one of this superb fleet in the form of a Bedford WTB. Sadly it was not to be for long as I soon found that there was far more to owning a vehicle of this size than just being able to drive it. Maintenance was another matter altogether, and having the right tools and ability to work on a large commercial was a skill that I had yet to acquire. But as luck would have it, I found another buyer almost immediately.

causing the body to creak and groan under duress as the spring eyes rolled in the shackles and the ash framed bodywork stretched to excess movement, all in a perfectly natural way! Those were halcyon days indeed. It was on one of the rare occasions I was given this particular vehicle, that I found myself bound for a day out in Syon Park in West London and whilst on the return trip decided to throw in a 'little extra' by taking my coach load of disabled youngsters, on their one and only annual outing from their residential home, through Richmond Great Park to show them the deer in natural surroundings. I had inadvertently completely overlooked the fact that anything other than a private motor vehicle required a permit from the Royal Parks constabulary to enter the Park. Half way through traversing this beautiful landscape, I was suddenly aware of a white Land Rover speeding from down amongst the distant trees, on the side of which was written in bold letters 'POLICE'. The vehicle in question eventually drove across my path broadsides on, and a uniformed constable hurriedly alighted from the Land Rover requesting me to show my official permit. I was at a loss for words as he withdrew his note book from his pocket and asked me for my particulars. I began by telling him that these mentally retarded children had but one outing a year and I had decided on our return trip home to treat them to seeing the deer. As he listened his attention was drawn to fact that there were now some thirty odd pitiful faces all staring out at the two of us. Slowly he stopped writing, returned the book and pen to his top pocket, informing me that in future I must obtain an official permit before entering a Royal Park, to which I assured him that I would. He then informed me that for the rest of this journey he would provide an escort to all the lesser known points of interest within Richmond Great Park!



The other half-cab in the fleet worthy of note was Fred Cheeseman's AEC Regal, which like all the other venerable members of this fleet, had a character all to its own. Slow they were, but what delightfully period noises would emanate when turning across steep cambers

But eventually after a number of years working for Gilberts Luxury Coaches, all good things had to come to an end and sadly. Harry decided to retire, now well past official retiring age, and the business was sold to a local business, Beeline Radio Taxis of Tunbridge Wells. This was run by the Maynard bothers who hailed from my village of Speldhurst and who went on to build up a thriving coach business under the name of Beeline Coaches for the next few years, and for whom I was pleased to carry on my association with as a part-time driver.

In this time they acquired many new additions to the fleet and enlarged the work force considerably, but all in all it lost the atmosphere of the pre-war elegance that prevailed whilst Harry still ran the business.

Speeding Charabancs

DAVID GRIMMETT

Whilst browsing through the online catalogue of the Bristol Records Office my eye was attracted to an entry described as "*Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company: Report of proceedings at Bristol Petty Sessional Court*". I go to Bristol quite frequently and so made a note of the reference number, planning to visit the records office on my next visit. I have found it is best to telephone records offices in advance of any intended visit, and if you can tell them what you wish to see they often have it ready on your arrival. Driving a coach to Bristol on the day of my intended visit meant I could not be precise enough to book the records I wanted to see, and so I turned up "on the off chance". As on previous visits to Bristol this did not present a problem and within minutes of filling in my request a rather dated folio was, enticingly, on the table in front of me. Sometimes the catalogue descriptions can be vague, sometimes inaccurate so my hopes are never set too high but here was a little gem.

The folio contained a typed summary of the proceedings of the Bristol Petty Sessional Court for 6 July 1922 and immediately I was into the hearing of 'The Police v Albert Knott'. Knott was before the bench for driving HT 1042 along Hotwell Road [Bristol] in excess of 12 m.p.h. on 14 June 1922. HT 1042 was, apparently a charabanc owned by the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company and the company had instructed Mr. G. Wansborough to defend this driver, plus several other drivers in court on that day on similar charges. Knott entered a plea of "not guilty" and the case proceeded. It was constable Smith who measured HT 1042 as travelling a set 220 yards in 28 seconds which was computed to equal 16 m.p.h. There was the usual court rigmarole setting the scene but some key points emerged that are fascinating. The "trap" was set up along Hotwell Road, although on two occasions the prosecution corrected himself when using the term trap and insisted it was not a trap as such. The method employed involved three police officers. Along the chosen road was measured a section stretching 220 yards (one furlong). Officer A would stand at the beginning of the furlong whilst officer B was at the far end with a stop watch. As the potential speeder passed, officer A would drop a white handkerchief, the signal for officer B to start the watch. It would seem these stop watches were calibrated to show the speed as well as the time taken, and so officer B could immediately identify an offender. He in

turn would signal to officer C, sited further along the road, whose job was to pull over the vehicle in question. On mentioning this method to various people, almost always the first comment has been along the lines of "surely the driver saw the policeman drop the handkerchief - why didn't he slow down?" Consider that these drivers in court, with legal representation, pleaded not guilty - almost certainly because they believed they were driving within the speed limit, and it is crucial to remember their vehicles had no speedometers, a fact continually made by the defence. The defence also criticised the measure being used as having previously been discovered to be 2 feet short of a furlong and as for the stop watch - he observed "it was rusty outside, could it not be the same inside and therefore inaccurate".

The same court also heard a case against George Gamblin driving HT 5324 belonging to Greyhound Motors Ltd.. Mr Atchley, defending, drew to the attention of the court that "I have seen a letter from the Minister of Transport to the chief of a neighbouring constabulary, asking that certain proceedings under this order shall not go on, providing the speed of 20 m.p.h. is not exceeded."

In each case the defence used every argument it could muster, even down to suggesting charabancs were being targeted - how many car drivers were prosecuted for doing in excess of their permitted speed?

The bench would have none of it, and universally the drivers were convicted, nearly all having clean licences, receiving the usual fine of 40/-. The defence of the Bristol Tramways drivers did not stop there, pointing out that such a high fine would cause great hardship to the family of a driver earning £3- 9 -0 a week, in response to which the bench gave any such driver a month to pay.

So often turning up a folio such as this is only the tip of the iceberg, and time precludes further activities by this researcher at present, but the rewards should encourage everyone to start delving. The court records went on to mention another driver convicted of speeding in Bristol from my home town of Minehead. Was he on a day tour? Some 120 miles at a permitted speed of 12 m.p.h. surely a marathon. The driver in question was a Mr. Hill and it transpired that I have known Mr. Hill's daughter for many years and it was a delight to tease her that her father had a criminal record for driving at 16 miles an hour!

Wartime Notices on Coventry Corporation Buses

(see previously p.24, *Newsletter 46*.) A further small selection provided by Giles Fearnley.

HAIL, RAIN OR SNOW !

War conditions make it necessary to strongly urge cyclists to be prepared to ride their cycles to and from work in all weathers.

The bus driver appreciates their help when they keep close to the kerb, and avoid riding more than two abreast.

REALITIES !

This winter, buses will be more in demand than ever before, and although opposed to our peacetime custom, it is necessary to request you to continue to ride your cycle, or walk the shorter distances throughout the winter.

CREDIT

This morning all the buses left the Grange and dispersal points punctually - that cannot be beaten, and there is credit to those in overalls as in uniforms.

July 17th 1943