Newsletter

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The Roads and Road Transport History Association
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The Motor Show

Roy Larkin

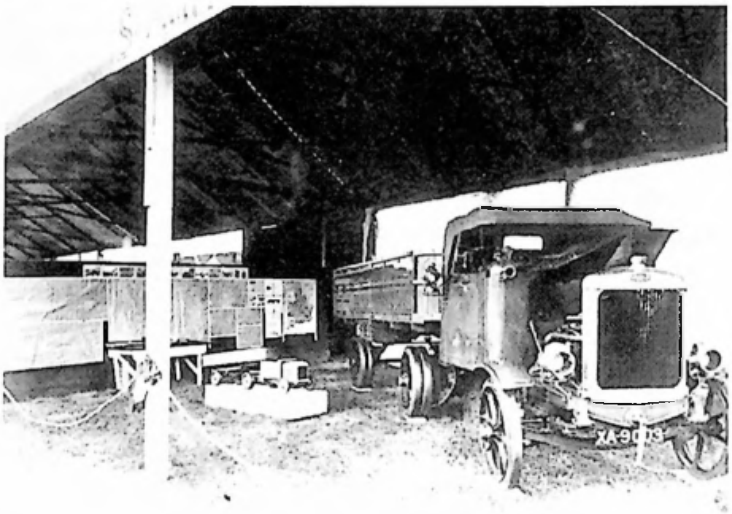
In 1948, The Motor Show and Commercial Vehicle Exhibition resumed at Earls Court after a break for the war years.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), organisers of the Motor Shows, marked this 60th Anniversary by including historic vehicles at the 2008 Commercial Vehicle Show.

In 1902, Frederick Simms convened a meeting with leading motor trade businessmen and in July of that year the SMMT was registered as a company.

The principle aim was to bring order to the growing number of ad hoc motor shows organised in London as the fledgling motor industry started to grow.

The first SMMT exhibition was held at Crystal Palace in January 1903, before moving to Olympia in 1905. The exhibitions remained at Olympia for 32 years before moving to the newly opened Earls Court in 1937. In 1959, the SMMT joined with the Smithfield Club and the Agricultural Engineers Association to form an agreement to stage an annual exhibition at Earls Court.



Scammell stand at the 1922 show at Olympia.

The purpose built National Exhibition Centre at Birmingham provided the venue from 1978. The car show moved to London's ExCel in 2006 as The British Motor Show, with the Commercial vehicle Show remaining at the NEC.

Scammell stand at the 1957 show at Earls Court.

By 1920, the remit of the SMMT had grown to include legislative trade policy, races, automotive standards and charitable donations. 1926 saw the establishment of a Statistical Information Department and an Overseas Department followed in 1933.

Today, the SMMT represents the motor industry at national, European and global levels whilst still keeping to its original purpose of organising the Motor Show.

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Editorial

Welcome to the September Newsletter and I hope you enjoy it.

I am pleased to be able to include both answers to last issue's Members' Forum and new enquiries for this issue. Thank you to all who responded. It is your column, the more contributions, the greater the variety and interest.

2008 sees some notable anniversaries and I make no apology for including two articles regarding British Road Services. One recalls the acquisitions process and the other recalls what it was like working for BRS. Both acknowledge the 60 years since BRS was formed.

It is important to recognise and record anniversaries.

Now is the time to be thinking of anniversaries for 2009 and even 2010. The time to be writing your articles or offering suggestions to be researched. I look forward to seeing all your ideas and articles.

Personal recollections are a theme in this issue and there is the first instalment of Bill Baines' account of his time with a Yorkshire bus company, thanks to David Allen.

Tony Newman's articles pose more questions than they answer but are still fascinating subjects. They are what makes transport history so fascinating and the newsletter is an ideal place for them

2008 Conference

Leaving No Stone Unturned - A Research Workshop on the Road Transport History & Local History.

There is still time to book your tickets for what will surely be an interesting and varied day of presentations on Archives Nationally, Local Archive Research, Internet Research, Recording Contemporary Oral History and What Editors Look For.

Tickets are available from our treasurer, John Howie, and the venue is Leatherhead Leisure Centre, Leatherhead, Surrey at 10.30am on Saturday 18th October.

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Appeal from the Chairman

Grahame Boyes

Behind the scenes, the Association has been through some difficult months since the resignation of some of its directors, including Garry Turvey as Chairman in August last year.

This has resulted in some organisational changes. At the Association's AGM earlier this year Peter Jaques took over as Secretary and I was approached to join the Board, with a view to filling the gap as Chairman at the subsequent Board meeting in April.

The Board was created in 2005 when, as a financial safeguard, the Association was turned into a 'company limited by guarantee'. The Board itself then took over the administrative role of the previous committee, but the resulting formal style in conducting the affairs of the Association has proved to be unhelpful.

At the July Board meeting it was decided to re-constitute the Committee and adopt a more informal way of working. The Board will meet only to fulfil the legal requirements, such as the approval of the annual report and accounts.

The downside is that, because of other commitments, Peter and I both have only limited time to make available to the Association.

We are therefore appealing for volunteers to come forward to help with aspects of the Associations' administration and planning its activities.

For example, we need a new webmaster for the Association's website. (Don't let lack of technical experience put you off; we might be able to arrange training.)

We have been discussing the value of an Association logo and are looking for a member (or perhaps a spouse/ partner) with ideas and/or design skills.

If you are willing to consider either of these specific roles, or to be approached about helping the Association in other ways, please do contact me.

Grahame Boyes

Bournemouth District Milk Passenger & Goods Service

Tony Newman

A photograph found in the 'East Dorset Villages' section at the Priest's House Museum, Wimborne Minster, Dorset prompted further investigation.

The picture shows a vehicle similar to an open top double deck bus, but although passengers are on the top deck, the lower deck is filled with milk churns. It carries the registration mark EL 927, and is dated 1917 on the reverse, with a 1918 postmark.

The stairs to the upper deck bear the name H. Newland & Co. The caption states that it was operated by Bournemouth District Milk Passenger & Goods Service and served a number of villages on a twice daily round. I cannot trace this name registered as an Incorporated Company and therefore assume it must have been a partnership.

This vehicle appears to be at the period when informal week-end and holiday time conversion of commercial vehicles into char-a-bancs or omnibuses was coming to an end.

Kelly's Directories (Bournemouth), 1928, lists H. Newland & Co, (Haulage Contractors & Carriers) at 42 Malmesbury Park Road.

The PSV Circle's Motor Tax records give this vehicle as a Straker 30hp Lorry/DD new in April 1914 to H. Newland, Bournemouth; licence cancelled December 1914. This presumably means that the first licence expired at the end of the year, and there is no record of its renewal.

Straker looks earlier than 1918 - Priest's House Museum

One wonders whether the vehicle might have been requisitioned during the war and returned later, or perhaps the date of the photograph is not 1917, but 1914.

Memories of BRS

(Courtesy CVRTC)

Ex-BRS employees, Chris Salaman and Bob Rust plus an imposter share some of their memories of their time at BRS.

Chris Salaman:
It was with some trepidation that I reported to Hampstead Branch Manager, Reg Freeman, after my first introduction to Divisional Manager, Bernard Ridley. Bernard had conducted my initial interview in a somewhat inebriated state and one week later didn't recognise who I was. Reg promptly told him that I was the new junior trainee that he'd appointed the previous week.

"So indeed I did," followed by a hearty slap on the back which caused me to drop the pack of carefully sorted Ops.4s. The first hour's work in my new job scattered across the floor!

Reg was a disciplinarian when it came to work as I found out one Monday morning when I failed to get to work due to being snowbound in deepest Kent. Unfortunately, everybody else had struggled in, so when I turned up the following day I was docked a day's pay. However, shortly after, Reg gave me the opportunity to make it back and so regain not only my wages, but credibility and confidence as well.

Bristol eight-wheel rigid - Phil Sposito

There were three General Haulage branches within a mile of each other, which I soon found to my advantage. Shortly after commencing my employment, I was running errands between the three, fortunately all within comfortable walking distance.

Within a year, I had obtained my driving licence and was able to drive the branch service van (1A363), an Austin 101, which kindled a love for 'J'-Types that remains to this day.

The office staff were a likeable lot, one of whom I'm still in contact with and who, like me, had a keen interest in the lorries themselves. Tony Asquith was three years my senior, so initially taught me much of the everyday working of the depot.

The depot foreman was Harry Skelton, a highly skilled man in both vehicle movements and man management. He taught me much that I remember to this day and was well respected by managers and drivers alike.

The driving staff came in two main categories. Shunters (day drivers) and trunkers (night drivers). Most of them were old-timers, having joined the industry before nationalisation and therefore particularly experienced.

Two exceptions were a couple of young drivers, one of whom came from a family of haulage men and is still with us today and a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the 'enthusiast's society'. He is, of course, Bob Rust. The other was Les Nye, another of our fraternity.

The other depot staff were mainly loading bank or maintenance workers (mechanics).

Hampstead Branch specialised in trunking to the North-West, mainly Lancashire. Every night 65 heavily laden 16-tonners, mainly artics would leave the Cressey Road premises. All were headed for their respective change-over points in the Midlands. The most popular was Rowley Road, Coventry, another was Bromford Lane, Birmingham. Here their counterparts from the North-West would meet them, change trailers and return home.

Cressey Road was the former LCC tram and trolley bus depot and the tram lines were still visible at the main entrance.

The journey route to and from Hampstead was nearly always the old A5 trunk road. Few drivers used the M1, which was considered a desolate highway with no facilities for the long -distance driving fraternity. The A5 offered numerous cafes and stopping points which were havens for meeting old colleagues for a chin-wag over a large mug of tea, with a wholesome meal.

Loads varied from regular contracts such as H.J. Heinz (concentrated food essences) between Harlesden and Kitt Green, Wigan, steel from Summers at Shotton to Ford at Dagenham, to mixed commodities of all shapes and sizes, creating several drops to each load.

There was perishable fruit and veg. Traffic from Covent Garden Market, which was always a priority to get to the northern markets on time. This traffic was shared with Liverpool haulier, Alfred Dexter Ltd who had a London depot just below Cressey Road. We maintained an excellent working relationship with Dexters, with drivers from each organisation often helping each other out when on the road.

Forty of the artic units were Bristols with Leyland O.600 engines, ten were Bristol rigid-eights, two of which had boxvan bodies and the rest of the fleet was made up from A.E.C.s and Seddons, the latter used primarily for collection and delivery (C&D) work.

Without doubt, my favourites were the half dozen A.E.C. Mammoth Majors and it was this enthusiasm that finally persuaded Harry Skelton to let me have a drive during a quiet lunchtime. The vehicle was 1A318, a 16-ton boxvan. I climbed in the cab and soon had the engine running as Harry leaned over the engine cover and carefully explained what to do.

We manoeuvred around the empty yard several times until eventually Harry had me drive down to the depot gates. I'd automatically assumed he'd have me reverse back, but to my utter surprise he told me to proceed and turn left onto the main street.

I did everything exactly as he told me, which was actually only steering as Harry did all the gear changing, needless to say without touching the clutch. We climbed up around the perimeter road that encircled Hampstead Heath, through Highgate and eventually back to the depot.

On taking the last turn into the depot, two elderly ladies standing on the kerb looked up in utter astonishment. 'Look at that young boy driving that huge lorry!' It's something I've never forgotten and thanks to Harry achieved something not many seventeen-year-olds could. Halcyon days indeed!

Bob Rust:
When I came out of the Army in 1955, I tried to get a job with BRS Parcels at Coppetts Road, but to quote the gateman, 'conditions are so good here, you'll have to wait for someone to die for a vacancy'.

So, I went driving with various small hauliers until a huge disagreement over my Union activities. That led to my Branch Manager, who worked for BRS getting me a job as holiday relief at Hampstead depot.

After six years of 'private enterprise', BRS was a revelation. Vehicles were serviced regularly, all had tyres with treads and defects were repaired almost on demand. No more trekking from garage to garage to get DERV, trying to find one where your firm was not yet on the blacklist. Whatever went wrong, there was always help, be it breakdown, puncture, accident or shot load.

I was so impressed by BRS that when my holiday relief was over I decided to stay in the fold. My Trade Union contacts again came to my aid and Johnny Rolfe, the Hampstead Branch Secretary sat on the same committee as Bill Carter, Senior Shop Steward at BRS Parcels, Muswell Hill branch, where I'd tried for a job in 1955. Thus I got a job as a checker-loader at the Coppetts Road depot, which was formerly a Fisher Renwick depot and home to the famous 'Showboats'.

The Depot Superintendent was Bill Watkins, an ex-Bouts Tillotson man from Stratford. This suited quite well as it was only ten minutes from home. This was the depot at which Parcels had just commissioned the first floor level carousel conveyor. It was very cold in autumn and winter, though we did get issued good donkey jackets and free cocoa.

BRS Seddon with typical Parcels trailer - CVRTC

From there I went to Kentish Town and back onto night trunking. When I moved to Basildon, I transferred to Grays branch. Here, while on 'day tramp' work, I discovered that security extended to always having a bed booked in decent digs, being able to park in Liverpool without worry and no longer being at the mercy of clearing house sharks. Eventually, I specialised in extra long trailers.

Later, I moved to Morton's (BRS) Ltd, a voluntarily nationalised company, when they opened a depot just down the road to where I lived.

Without doubt, BRS, with its good organisation and good pay and conditions improved the lot of the general haulage driver beyond all recognition.

Roy Larkin:
Never an actual 'BRS Man' like Chris or Bob, my days in the mid '70s at Southern BRS, Amersham Depot were spent as a self-employed casual driver. Although technically a relief driver, the work was 5 days a week, every week and more if ever wanted.

The main contract was for Ford, trunking parts from Daventry to Amersham for distribution to Ford garages throughout the South East as far west as Bournemouth. Ford 'D' Series 16-tonners did the 'rounds' and a mix of ERF, Scania, Guy artics the trunks. When Ford introduced the Transcontinental artic, four were allocated to Amersham for purely Daventry work.

Ford D Series - CVRTC

A Scania and a Scammell Crusader artic were used on a couple of the bigger rounds. The Crusader was used on the 'South Coast' which was the only round involving a night out, always at Hastings. From BRS's point of view, the Crusader was ideal as it was so uncomfortable to sleep in that an early start next day was guaranteed.

Start times were left pretty much up to the driver and early mornings were a cloud of smoke as cold engines were left running while loads were roped and sometimes sheeted. With management rarely in before the fleet left, it was the threat of rain rather than management that determined if the load was sheeted.

The managers had worked their way up from the bottom and I particularly remember Ray Rowe, who moved from the workshops to the traffic office. A no-nonsense man, Ray knew the job inside out as well as backwards and expected drivers to know their job. Wise enough though to recognise when a job was beyond a driver's experience.

One day Ray gave me an ERF with 40ft single axle trailer. As I gawped at him and muttered, 'you want me to take that round East London?' he just stated, 'you've got a licence, haven't you?'

Then, with a pat on the back he said that if he didn't think I could do it, then I wouldn't be taking it. Said like he meant it and to a young whippersnapper who'd not long had his licence it was a welcome confidence boost I remember to this day. Management as it should be. I worked for Ray several times after he went on his own and learned much about how to do the job the right way from him.

The Depot Manager was Mike, a real gentleman. Always suited and booted and always took an interest, never passing you in the yard without acknowledgement or asking how things were going and if BRS were paying my bill on time. He knew I worked for myself, not an agency, and I am grateful for the way he pushed my invoices for prompt payment through what could be a black hole called Potters Bar, under whose jurisdiction Amersham came.

It was a sad day when Amersham closed to become a trading estate, but in one particular way I was grateful. Some months later, my accountant informed me that BRS had paid me more than they should. It seems that Mike's pushing meant my invoices were paid quickly and out of sequence. Once they had worked their way through the system they were then paid again, several months later. That was thirty years ago, I kept quiet and still have my freedom, so I think I got away with it and might just have been the best paid driver BRS ever had.

Road Transport History Internet Project

The overall objective of this project is to bring together as many historical resources as possible to make possible proper research into the UK's road transport using the world-wide-web as a primary resource. So, to answer the question, it is for any student of UK road transport history to use as a primary resource.

One form it might take is a website that provides links to all known existing UK Road Transport websites with an abstract of the content for each. A more ambitious objective might be the ongoing digitisation of relevant historical documentation. A number of museums already have similar projects in operation on a smaller scale. At the present time, full specification for the project does not yet exist, hence the on-line questionnaire. This questionnaire is part of the information gathering process that will lead to a software specification document for the project.

http://www.roadtransporthistory.co.uk

The Hungarian Carriage

Gyula Antalffy
(Courtesy Corvina Books)

Few and far between must be today's travellers by National Express who know of the link between their conveyance and the cartwrights of a Hungarian village nearly 600 years ago.

Bertrandon de la Brocquière, Esquire-Carver, for such was his title, to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, was a seasoned traveller. He went to the Holy Land and wrote much about what he saw as he journeyed home in 1433. "Travelling through Hungary I often came across one-horse wagons carrying six, seven or even eight people," he wrote. "Some of these vehicles were covered; they were very pleasing, and so light that anyone could have carried the whole structure, including the wheels, on his shoulders. The back wheels were much larger than the front ones, and the body was very comfortable to sleep and rest in. The country being flat, the horse could trot everywhere."

This passage was quoted in a little volume called A Thousand Years of Travel in Old Hungary, by Gyula Antalffy[1]. Corvina Books, of Budapest, which published it in English back in 1980, has kindly given us permission to reproduce Antalffy's story of the Hungarian Carriage. What follows are his words.
*- **Andrew Waller***

This means of transport was quite new at that time, and differed from every other vehicle known until then. The French traveller was the first to describe the remarkable Hungarian invention: the carriage. A vehicle so light a man could lift it on this back could no longer be regarded as a wagon, and Brocquière evidently only called it so because he had never seen such a light means of passenger transport before.

The invention of the carriage was just as epoch-making in the field of transport as the appearance of the railways four hundred years later. The awkward, heavy, slow wagon for carrying passengers was superseded by a light and quick vehicle. Those clumsy, over-decorated, covered wagons in use could not cover more than 20 to 25 kilometres in a day, a distance which could equally be covered on foot.

Loaded wagon on muddy road - C17 engraving

Those who needed a swifter means of travel rode a horse. But long journeys without frequent stops could hardly be made on horseback; both horse and rider had need of rest.

The appearance of the new light vehicle, the carriage, the 'coach' from Kocs, made it immediately possible to travel if necessary day and night without rest. The new coach could travel as fast as a galloping horse, but more comfortably and for longer stretches. In this lay the epoch-making significance of this first rapid means of passenger transport, and it is this aspect that all foreign writers stress in their appreciative descriptions.

From Bertrandon de la Brocquière's account we learn that such light, covered, one-horse vehicles were already running on the Hungarian highways in the reign of King Sigismund (1387-1437). By the second half of the fifteenth century, under King Matthias[2], the carriage, or coach, was already in use all over the country. It was a vehicle with the body resting directly on the axles, not on spring or straps; it had a wickerwork body, steps, and often a tarpaulin cover, and was drawn by three horses. Four persons could travel in it comfortably.

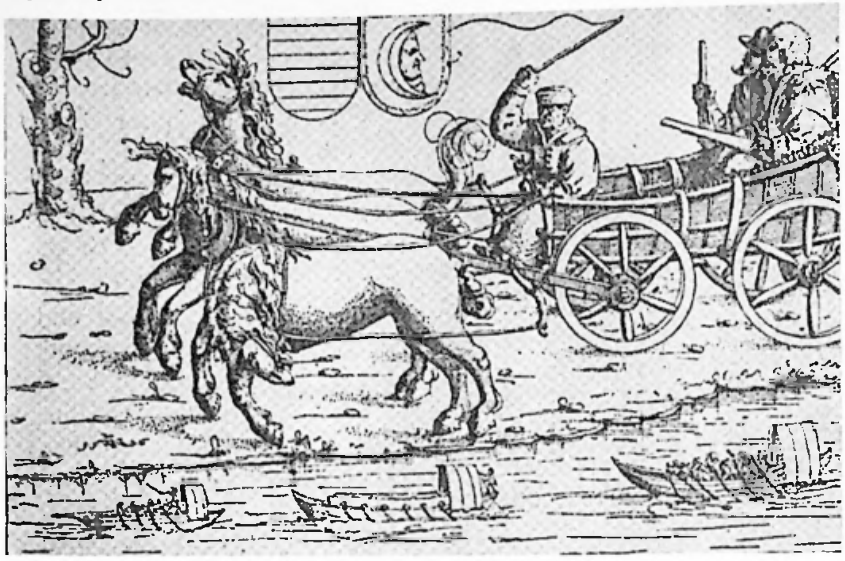
King Matthias had splendid horses and decorated covered wagons, but nevertheless liked to travel by the simpler carriage or new coach. Antonio Bonfini, the Italian historian, noted that 'King Matthias travelled at an incredible speed: in the rapid carriage (actuario curru) he covered as much as a hundred thousand paces (about 75 kilometres) a day.'

According to an account by the Bishop of Veszprém, János Liszti, the old cartwrights of Kocs village famous for their expertise, experimented with the new type of conveyance on the personal encouragement of King Matthias himself. It was these experiments in Kocs which led to its being named 'kocsi-széker' (coach-wagon) and later just 'kocsi' (coach)[3].

The name was then taken over practically all over the world. The German name 'Kutsche' derives from the Hungarian word, as does the English 'coach', the French 'coche', and the Italian 'cocchio'.

Siegmund Freiherr zu Herberstein, who in 1518 came as ambassador to the court of King Louis II, declared categorically that

the vehicle took its name from the village Kocs situated ten miles from Buda. Contemporary information confirms the origin of this carriage or coach: this method of transport, which spread all over Europe and opened up new potentialities in travel, came from Hungary.



Herberstein travelling from Vienna to Buda in a Hungarian carriage - engraving, 1546

For while from the middle of the fifteenth century the carriage was quite a common means of transport in this country, it only appeared in other parts of Europe in the middle of the sixteenth century. Brocquière frequently came across such carriages in Hungary as early as 1433, but in France the first such vehicles appeared a hundred years later, between 1540 and 1550. The first to refer to it as a 'coche' from the original Hungarian 'kocsi' was Montaigne[4].

In 1550 there were only three carriages in the whole of Paris; between 1600 and 1610 the new type of vehicle began to be more frequently seen in the streets of the French capital.

In Spain, too, the first carriage or 'coach' appeared only between 1540 and 1550. The Spanish historian Avila y Zuniga, in his *Commentarios* (1547) remarked that 'Charles V slept in his covered vehicle, called a *kocsi* in Hungary, whence not only the name, but the invention itself derives.'

All through the sixteenth and even at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries the main method of travel in Western Europe was the slow, heavy and jolting wagon, but in Hungary this 'coach' was the principal vehicle by the end of the fifteenth century.

A generation after the death of Matthias, travelling by carriage had become so fashionable with the gentry that, for the sake of comfort many of them went on military expeditions by coach instead of on horseback or on foot.

The German humanist and Viennese professor, Johannes Cuspicianus, who was sent to Hungary as an envoy on twenty-four occasions, recorded in 1515 that many of the Hungarian nobles travelled in fast wagons the Hungarian appellation of which was 'kocsi'. Such vehicles could cover distances of a hundred thousand paces a day.

As the use of the carriage spread, traffic on the highways quickened. Tommaso Dainero, who came to Buda as the envoy of the Duke of Ferrara in 1501, found travelling by carriage a swift means of transport. He was interested in it, and reported that the 130 Italian miles (280 kilometres) between Buda and Vienna could be covered by a vehicle with four seats called a 'kocsi' (coecia) within a day and a night. 'The vehicle,' he said, 'was drawn by three horses and was driven by a 'coachman'. The horses are changed once in summer and twice in winter.'

We also have a contemporary picture of the carriage of the sixteenth century, which – in view of the conditions then prevailing – was considered an extremely fast and comfortable means of transport. A sketch-book of the Augsburg painter, Jeremias Schemel, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century, contains a drawing with the title 'Ein Ungarische Gutsche'.

The drawing shows three rearing horses, harnessed abreast. On the right side of the carriage a shaft is fixed with a whipple tree to the axle of the rear wheels for the third horse. The body is wickerwork, sloping back towards the top, probably in order to make it easy to cover it with a tarpaulin in case of need. The back seat accommodates two persons, and there is place for a third on the smaller opposite seat behind the coachman. A loose hanging bag of fleecy lambskin filled with down was part of the coach furniture.

When the traveller wanted to sleep he pulled the bag round his shoulders and neck, to prevent his head banging against the side of the carriage. Otherwise he used it as a cushion to support his back and make the seat more comfortable.

According to the contemporary drawing and contemporary descriptions, this was the type of vehicle King Matthias used for the first mail-coach service in the country. He had staging posts for baiting the horses set up on the Buda-Vienna road and started a regular coach service between the two capitals.

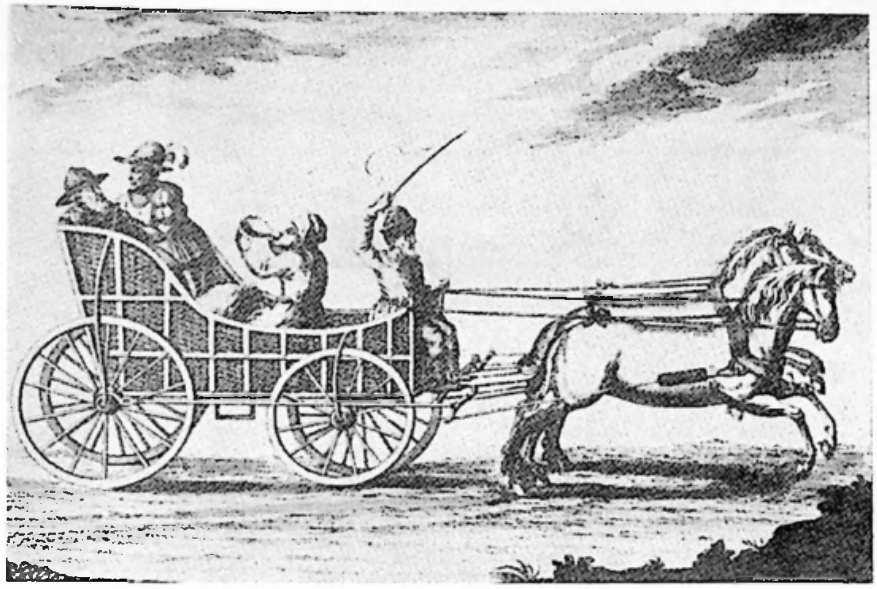
The service was used by the king himself as well as by the foreign envoys to the court, who often travelled

along this route. The staging posts for baiting the horses were situated five or six miles apart[5] and the horses were changed at Győr.

In addition to the Buda-Vienna mail-coach service, Matthias established similar services on the other principal roads in the country, but these ceased to function after the king's death.

The Viennese mail was still in existence in 1518 when Herberstein travelled in Hungary, for it was he who described the journey by the mail in the greatest detail. The carriage could take four, including the coachman. They ran day and night, baiting the horses every five or six miles, and changing them in Győr, which makes it clear that the system was unchanged a quarter of a century after Matthias's death.

Like Dainero in 1501, Herberstein took a day and a night to reach Vienna and considered this a pleasant manner of travelling, particularly as he could carry food, clothes and even bedding with him. This, in fact is where we first meet the ancestor of the sleeper.



Hungarian Carriage - C16 copper engraving

[1] *The book was first published in Hungarian in 1975, under the title Így utaztunk hajdanában (Thus we travelled in olden times). Gyula Antalffy (1912-1997) was a well-known journalist in Hungary.*

[2] *Matthias I, King of Hungary 1458-1490, born 1440.*

[3] *The Hungarian word 'kocsi' corresponds to both 'carriage' and 'coach'.*

[4] *Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-1592).*

[5] *A Hungarian mile = 8.3 kilometres.*

Peterborough Omnibus & Carriage Co.

Tony Newman

When researching defunct Company Registration Files, it is always a pleasant relief from the piles of statutory forms to find a Formal Agreement. Although the language of such agreements is legal and long-winded there is often a wealth of detail, not usually available elsewhere, which is to be found in the schedules at the end of the agreement.

The file for Peterborough Omnibus & Carriage Co., Ltd (BT31/6860/48255) sets out the details of its incorporation on 9th June 1896. It had a Nominal Capital of £5,000 in £1 shares and the Registered Office was at 1 New Road in Peterborough. The first Directors consisted of two local Aldermen and two Councillors, lead by Daniel Henry Redhead, J.P. as Chairman of the Board. The key document in the file is the legal agreement, dated 21st May 1896, to purchase the business of James Griffiths-Averill who had been operating as the Peterborough Omnibus & Carriage Company.

This agreement not only lists all the buildings being purchased, but it also names and describes the horses together with the vehicles. The premises had frontages on to St.John's Street and North Boongate, with large outbuildings adjoining, and were formerly in the occupation of Messrs Fovargue, Manley and others. 31 of the 35 horses had names; some were typical such as 'Darky', 'Tareaway'(*sic*), and 'Fickle', but the reason for others, such as 'Billy Marshall', 'Calcutta' and 'Rail' are not so obvious. Details of the vehicles are even more intriguing. Numbers are quoted in the list which follows: Blue No.61, Red No.62, Red No.63, Green No.64, Dark Green Square No.65, Small Square No.56 and Fly Waggonette with Top No.50. There was also a variety of Cabs. It is stated that one Omnibus is in the Carriage Builder's Hands and another is in London. One wonders what a full fleet list would have looked like and the fact that one Omnibus was in London raises further questions. Were provincial horse buses often in London? What was this one doing there? As always, one piece of research only opens the door to another! Most of the shares in the Company were held in small numbers by local people, but Robert Edmund Coe, a Builder, at one time held 2,200 of the 4,000 shares issued. Richard Wright, described as an Omnibus Inspector held 50 shares; was he an employee perhaps? Three months

after formation the Registered Office moved to 18 Long Causeway and, almost three years later, to St. John's Street. There was a big change in August 1901 when four new Directors replaced all but the Chairman on the board. Also, around this time, Coe disposed of most of his shares. Perhaps the days of horse bus operation were seen to be coming to an end. For whatever reason, the next four years were downhill for the business and in July 1905 it was decided to wind up voluntarily.

Retirement Issues

Dave Bubier

On retiring from employment with what had become part of, albeit by only a few months, the German Post Office, there seemed little inclination to unduly concern oneself with the activities aimed at keeping retired staff 'in touch'. Receipt of the company pension and regular confirmation that the funds thereof remained healthy seemed more than sufficient.

Surprise therefore that arrival of *Moving On*, the magazine for retired staff of Exel is now looked forward to and holds a deal of interesting material. Exel was, of course, the latter day entity of the privatised National Freight Corporation and thus successor to British Road Services. Consequently the ranks of the longer retired staff represented therein are drawn from an era when this was virtually the whole of the road freight industry rolled into one.

Amongst the reports of social occasions, etc, (a very strong branch structure around the country) and, sadly, all too many obituaries, are fascinating recollections of the past, photographs, old ephemera, etc.

In a recent issue a widow posed a very poignant question. Why has the role of the HGV drivers of World War Two, including her late husband, never been officially acknowledged or mentioned in remembrance programmes, etc? Drivers working on behalf of the Ministry of War Transport were in a reserved occupation, similar to the miners, chosen for their knowledge of the roads and experience, work that neither woman nor inexperienced men could do. They faced considerable dangers, moving vital cargoes to and from the docks to military bases, etc., driving unsigned and unlit roads with little more than a candle for headlight and oblivious to the Blitz. Without these drivers it is unlikely that the country could have come through those dark years in the way it did. Transport workers of the railway and bus sectors have been recognised for their role, but not the HGV drivers. Few if any are still with us but it is fair comment that their courage and bravery should not pass into history without some acknowledgement.

But it was the submission by a retiree of some extracts from an earlier staff magazine that has uncovered a rich new, or at least not previously fully appreciated, vein of information regarding the earlier years of the haulage industry. Pickfords in the early post-war period published *Driving Mirror*. This led to mention of an earlier publication of Carter Paterson called *Window Card* with which was included a 1941 booklet called *Delivering The Goods* that contained tales of the difficulties of working through the Blitz. Most poignant in this was the back cover which simply said 'Please Keep This ... because one day peace will be won and children will grow up to whom 'Blitz' will mean nothing. Whether they wish to or not these children, in years to come, ought to read what war is and what their fathers and mothers did. So please keep this for them'. It seems that, remarkably, some of these publications have indeed been passed down in private hands.

Staff magazines do not, of course, figure as newspapers and so were not to be found in the erstwhile Colindale collection for research purposes. But all of the above, plus some 150 other titles covering road, rail and canal and dating from well back into the 19th C and right up to the privatisation of NFC in the 1980s had been merged from earlier collections to form a part of the library of the British Transport Holding Co during the nationalised period. Fortunately this survived the 'in the skip' mentality of privatisation and now forms part of the National Archives under Class ZPER. Thus the transport industry is well blessed with written sources that can be trawled for historical research and, even better, we are speaking here of the real thing, not micro-fiche.

Double Anniversary

The Scammell Register will be celebrating their Silver Jubilee by marking the 20th anniversary of the closure of the Scammell Lorries plant at Watford with a rally at Croxley Green, near Watford on 20th and 21st September.

A road-run is planned for the Saturday to the old factory at Tolpits Lane, Watford along with a reunion gathering of old Scammell employees at Croxley Green.

The event will combine with Carter's Steam Fair, who operate a fleet of classic lorries, including seven Scammells, to pull their ever growing collection of vintage and steam fair ground rides.

Recollections of a District Traffic Officer
B.R.S. In the Early Days

Dick Marsh
(Courtesy Moving On)

Written by Dick Marsh, it was to have formed a talk to be given by him to a NFC Retirement Association meeting in 1993. Sadly, he died that year before doing so and we are fortunate that the text was preserved by Bryan Wilson and later submitted as this article. Dick Marsh was Traffic Officer of East Yorkshire District Office in the North Eastern Division and involved in the acquisition process at a local level. He eventually became an Operations Manager for BRS and retired in 1972. - Dave Bubier

I found it extremely difficult to cast my mind back 36 years to the distant days when I first became involved in the implementation of the 1947 Transport Act so far as it concerned road transport. So many changes - reorganisations, rationalisations and denationalisations - have taken place since then that I found it almost impossible to remember in detail the day to day incidents of those times.

The 1947 Act was based on 1946 operations. Hauliers who had operated long distance transport (over 40 miles - over 25 miles from their operating base) for hire and reward (50% by tonnage or revenue) received notice of acquisition (with exceptions - bulk liquids, cattle, indivisible loads). Operators who did not receive such notices had a right to apply for acquisition but would have to prove their right under the Act.

Scammell R8 of Currie & Co, absorbed into North Eastern Area. The sign on the building states: Ministry of War Transport, Road Haulage Organisation, Unit No. 102 - Roy Larkin

I joined the Road Haulage Executive (RHE) in early 1949. The Divisional and District organisations had by that time been established, with Divisions based mainly on the headquarters of the War Transport Organisation and District Headquarters in major cities, based on the HQs or major depots of the large national companies which were the first acquisitions. Staffing was minimal and it was some time before the establishments were to be agreed. These no doubt had produced some problems but it was agreed that the senior officials concerned, Divisional and District Managers, were men of experience and integrity.

Discontent

The first major operation was the setting up of the Group system in key areas and the appointment of Group Managers. The policy was to establish more or less self-contained operating units into which the smaller hauliers to be acquired could be integrated and could continue to operate and serve their customers without too much interference.

There was a limited number of such Groups and the appointment of the Manager from among the many small operators caused a great deal of jealousy and discontent, as will be appreciated - as many small contractors found themselves subject to the authority of men who had previously been their bitter rivals.

During the war the Ministry of War Transport had controlled the small hauliers and after the war some of the more progressive operators had built up quite large groups of small companies and had become important members of the industry. The general approach was based on an assumption that road transport had been run mainly by the large national companies but it soon became apparent that a very large portion of business had been in the hands of hundreds of small operators with fleets of between 6 and 30 vehicles and that these contractors were being used by many of the large manufacturing companies, such as Metal Box, Reckitt and Coleman and ICI. The reason soon became obvious. Apart from the advantages of keeping rates low, the personal perks obtained by transport managers and dispatch staff were considerable. Hence the opposition to the new set-up by many of the large nationals.

Sponsored Holiday

Even Ministry Departments were not immune. I recollect a case where, in spite of repeated efforts to

retain business from the Ministry of Works, which had been handled by a contractor who had been acquired, we were not successful. The reason became clear when, during a stay in a small hotel in Spain, I was surprised by the appearance of a particular haulier in a large car with a great deal of luggage, accompanied by his wife and the local manager of the Ministry and his wife, obviously on a sponsored holiday! They were very surprised to see me and left early the next day.

Problems arose when the acquisition of the smaller hauliers began. Contractors eligible for acquisition under the Act were selected by Headquarters in conjunction with Divisional Offices. When agreed files were submitted to District Office, who were responsible for the physical transfer, a small team of Accountant, Engineer, Staff and Traffic set out hopefully to undertake these tasks, armed with details of vehicles, properties, staff, customers, contracts and so on.

Most of these acquisitions went off reasonably well without a great deal of trouble. We were on occasion kept waiting for undue periods, or sent away as the proprietor was unavailable, but in most cases we did eventually catch up with him. Many of the small operators had almost no administrative organisation and often their larger customers kept records of traffic movements and even submitted their own invoices and recorded which payments were made.

My own personal recollection of the majority of acquisitions was a feeling of sadness and even guilt. Some operators were men of integrity and energy and had taken a pride in building up their small business, which often gave employment to their wives and families, and had established strong personal ties with their customers. You can appreciate that in such cases we were not received exactly cordially.

Shotgun

A few acquisitions proved difficult. One which I remember particularly now appears funny but could have been tragic. It was known that the operator concerned had fought against acquisition and threatened that no one could take his business away from him. The acquisition party arrived at the premises at the appointed time and found the door locked. After some delay one of the staff came to the gate and said that the proprietor was not available and that he had left instructions that we were not to be admitted. After a further delay the proprietor arrived, obviously the worse for drink, and told us to clear off. The Group Manager, a rather colourful character and a rival operator, attempted to enter the premises and was met by the proprietor flourishing a shotgun. He said he would shoot the first man to enter his premises and in his condition I think he would have done. We withdrew for consultation and agreed the Group Manager would sit in the car and that we should attempt to reason with the operator. Eventually, with the assistance of his accountant and solicitor, we did gain entry and ultimately the acquisition went through.

Problems were not only caused by the attitude of the contractors to be acquired. We had on our side some rather difficult characters, who on occasion displayed very little tact.

Once, in Leeds, after long drawn-out negotiations, we had failed to agree exactly which vehicles should be taken over and so the proprietor refused to allow us to take any vehicles away until agreement had been reached to his satisfaction. Our Engineer at that time was also a headstrong fellow and he had other ideas. Early the following morning he went along on his own, broke into the garage and drove the vehicles out, damaging the doors in the process. The result was inevitable. The police were brought in and the Engineer was summoned and fined for breaking and entering.

Fred Edlin Scammell, absorbed into North Leicester Group - Roy Larkin

Poaching

Not all problems were confined to acquisitions. There was a great rivalry between Groups, and with the pressure on Group Managers to make their Groups viable, a great deal of poaching of each other's traffic went on. In some cases this was encouraged by customers who saw the possibility of keeping rates low.

One Group Manager complained bitterly at a District meeting that a neighbouring Group was poaching traffic from one of his larger customers. In a recent case, a driver, after picking up such a load, had called in his office and asked for the necessary documentation. The Group Manager's remarks were rather pithy. He said that it was bad enough that the offending Group Manager should **** on his doorstep, but it was the limit when he asked to be supplied with paper!

Disputes did occur regarding which assets of the firm were appropriate to the acquisition, particularly where hauliers were also involved in other businesses, such as farming, scrap dealing or the motor trade. In one case, a

small operator in a village near York was the owner of a derelict hall which she was eager to be rid of, so she presented it to us as part of her haulage undertaking. The place had been filled with spares - engines in the drawing room, tyres and wheels in the great hall and rear axles in the wine cellars.

She was one of those strong and masterful women who one often found running transport companies and it was only after a long legal wrangle that we acquired the company without the hall, which is now a Cheshire Home.

BRS Scammell, 1949 - Roy Larkin

Members' Forum

Thank you to Andrew and Tony for taking the interest and time to answer a question posed in this column (NL54). Thanks also to David and Roy for contributing with questions.

It is your Forum. You provide the questions that have been niggling away, and answer the questions you can. If you have a line or two of titbit that might be of general interest, or might just be the final missing piece of the jigsaw for somebody's research then share it.

If variety is the spice of life, it will be your contribution that is the spice of Members' Forum. I look forward to seeing all your contributions.

Lorry

My *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* says the word 'lorry' or 'lurry' is of north country origin. It adds: 'the spelling *laurie* in the minutes of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway of 3 Dec. 1834 suggests that the vehicle was called after an inventor named *Laurie'*. Who was Laurie?
Andrew Waller

Regarding the Members' Forum item about the origin of 'Lorry Driver', I looked first in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* and then realised that I should be looking in our own *Companion to British Road Haulage History*. Here there is an entry on the variants of 'Lorry' and, presumably the term 'lorry driver' would have been is use at the same time. What the *Companion* does not give, but *OED* does supply, is the earliest date found for use of the word, which is 1838.
Tony Newman

Roadside Tributes

Members of RRTHA will have noticed the growth in the practice of leaving flowers and memorabilia at the site of fatal road traffic accidents. The term 'roadside tributes' is used by highway authorities for these memorials and there is evidence that some authorities remove them.

The nearest tribute to my house are flowers (quite often renewed) tied to the pedestrian barrier at a zebra crossing, in memory of a cyclist who stopped there killed by a car driver who didn't.

It is clear that local press and regional television have debated the suitability of roadside tributes, and that a different custom (silhouettes erected by the highway authority) prevails in France.

My question is, when did the custom start, and why. My impression is that it started in 1997, and was an extension of the extraordinary floral tributes placed in memory of Princess Diana. This event, and the reduction in the significance of traditional religious ceremony seem to me to have been the causes of the tributes. It certainly was not a result in the growth of road casualties.

Do members have evidence of the date when the custom started, regional variations in the practice, and of official responses to it?
David Stewart-David

Queen Mary Trailers

The following enquiry was received through the R&RTHA website.

I was hitch-hiking while doing national service around 1953-54 and seem to remember getting a lift in a tractor cab (a large outfit) and I think it was referred to as a 'Queen Mary'.

Do any of your older members remember these artic vehicles (I think it was an artic but it may have been pulling a trailer or two. It had a large steel gear change gate and I was sat only on that for quite a lot of the way as he picked up many servicemen on that journey from Wiltshire to the N. West England.
Roy Sager

Early Days on the Buses

David Allen

William H Baines was one of the early employees of the B&S Motor Services (J Bullock and Sons) in Wakefield. This Featherstone based company had become one of the largest independent bus companies in the country when taken over by the West Riding Automobile Company in 1950.

Bill, as he was known, has recorded his early local experiences and interest in the operation of the first buses through his mining village, Snydale, where he first lived. Then follows an account of his employment as a conductor and then mechanic in the 6 years he worked for the bus company.

It is a fascinating account of the days when mobility of the working population, and indeed the growth of bus services was just taking off.

Bill died in 2007, well into his nineties, leaving behind this written legacy of those early working days. It was a pleasure and privilege meeting him. - David Allen

Part 1 - The Bus Comes To Snydale

Snydale, in the year 1922, was a mining village of fifty domiciles including a school, off-licence and a grocer's shop, and owed its existence to the coal seekers. The school, shops and houses were built in line on the south side of the A645 Wakefield to Pontefract road, parallel to a towering slag heap, running from one end of the village to the other - and still being extended.

The villagers of Snydale, living as they did, with a coal mine and bi-products on their doorstep - thankfully shielded by the slag heap - were fortunate in that, to the south of the village, there remained the unspoilt, panoramic green acres of Nostell Priory and gorse clad common land.

They were not so fortunate when it came to public transport. Therefore when the West Riding Automobile Company chose to route one of their new bus services through Snydale, it offered a welcome alternative to walking the half-mile to Sharlston station for Wakefield or Pontefract. The next nearest railway station was at Featherstone, a mile further east, and located a quarter of a mile off the A645.

The West Riding Automobile Co. launched their new passenger operation of buses on Easter Monday 1922 from their tram depots at Wakefield and Castleford.

According to village elders, the West Riding Bristol bus was not the first fare paying vehicle to ply for custom on the Wakefield/Pontefract route, as a vague reference was made to a solid tyre double-decker (ex London and Western Front veteran) opening up a short lived service after World War 1.

What is established fact is that a James Bullock, who lived in Featherstone, ran a Sunday only service (morning and evening trips) between Wakefield and Pontefract with a chara-a-banc. This service was withdrawn following the opening of the West Riding service.

It was obvious when West Riding took to the road, a great deal of planning had taken place to ensure the travelling public received a high standard of service. Fare stages appeared to have been planned on a cost effective basis. Not in some cases for passenger convenience. Under no circumstances were drivers allowed to pick up or set down passengers between stops.

The bus fleet was kept in immaculate condition, inside and out, with passengers subjected to a noticeable odour of disinfectant; and a sealed box of tools was carried on each bus, to be opened only in case of emergency.

Drivers were allowed four minutes engine warm up before leaving the garage for the stand. 'Stand' was the term used for terminal points, or inter-route city or town boarding and alighting points. As there were no bus stations in 1922, these stands were situated in thoroughfares within city or town centre.

Good timekeeping on service was paramount, drivers being issued with a watch, value five shillings, deducted from their first wage and redeemable on leaving the Company.

How the New Bus Company ticked.

In 1922, there was no legal limit to the number of hours worked by platform staff, and it would appear that rotas were based on morning and afternoon shifts, with a Sunday off following a week of afternoon shifts.

It was possible that split shifts were worked on Saturdays, with an afternoon shift crew being taken off the rota and being assigned to a 'special', later known as a 'duplicate' duty, starting at midday. This left three crews to do the work of four on two buses, i.e. one morning crew worked through until 6.0pm, the other morning crew were relieved at midday by a crew who would work the rest of the shift until the last trip. Meanwhile the midday relief would return to take over from the morning shift at 6.0pm. There were no official meal breaks.

Drivers and conductors were fitted out with a dark blue uniform with piping, hatband and 'choker' double hook and eye collar in mid-green. White cap covers were to be seen in summer.

On joining the Company, drivers and conductors would be put on 'spare', reporting every morning at 4.30am to take over in the event of any rota crew failing to turn up for duty. Transfer to rota duty depended on crew turnover. Payment was by the hour, with extra rates for overtime, the Company providing continuous service of 365 days throughout the year.

The conductor's tools of the trade were a ticket punch and money bag, the bag consisting of two half circles of hard, black leather stitched at the edges to a curved leather band, equally hard and complete with shoulder strap. Feeling for change played havoc with fingernails. These bags were made in Horbury, and one can be seen in Wakefield museum.

There was a tin box for bundles of tickets, ticket rack, tin waybill holder to record rack ticket numbers at designated fare stages and a whistle. On joining the Company, change (or float) to the value of three shillings and sixpence was given.

In the initial stages of the Snydale route, it was apparent that the crew were conforming to rules based on a dual purpose - first class service and the establishment of an amicable passenger relationship within the rules. The first drivers were Ted Whitty and Harold Fisher - Harold defecting to the B&S (J Bullock and Sons) some time later.

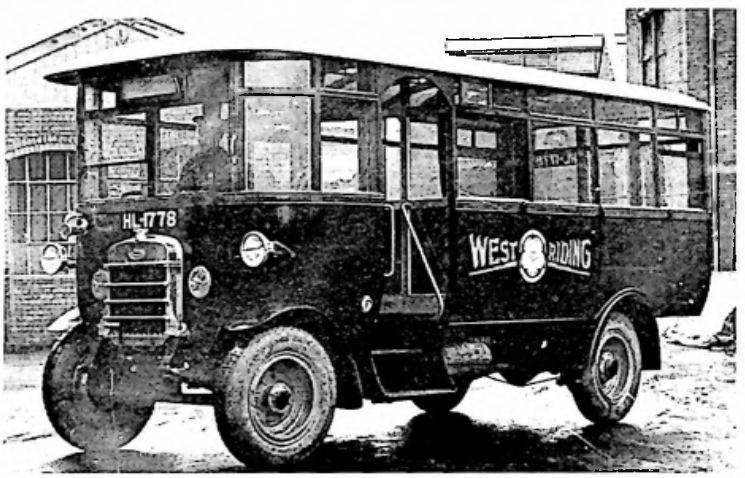
The code of discipline laid down by the Company was somewhat regimental. Strict adherence to fare stage charges was made essential, as was the standing passenger rule, except when waived by the police. A reprimand, suspension or dismissal could result for; a conductor punching the wrong stage number on a ticket, standing or sitting beside the driver on the open platform.

'Twisting' or embezzling, i.e. re-issuing used tickets to passengers, was the ultimate sin in the conductor's rulebook, with a definite point of no return. Smoking on duty was absolutely taboo, and no bus was left standing without conductor or driver in attendance - and there was always an inspector just around the corner.

To operate the new bus service, West Riding purchased 22 Bristol buses, solid tyre 4 tonners, to seat thirty passengers. The seats were made of wood laths, varnished in pine with the floor lined with spaced wood battens adding to the comfort in wet weather, of both passengers and conductor. As bus design progressed, the battens were replaced by 'lino', with no means of drainage, utter misery for conductors doing a non-stop fifteen-hour shift.

The entrance was at the front with no door fully exposed to the elements on the near side. A tram type cord; one for stop, two for go, and three for 'full up' operated a bell signal.

The mechanics of the Bristols were limited to the essentials, hand brake operating on the rear wheels and foot brake on the transmission. There was no front brake. Clutch operation was somewhat unorthodox, as when travelling downhill, the clutch pedal was depressed. With leaf springs all round, no shock absorbers and wooden seats, the ride was rather 'hard' when empty. With no press button starters, it was a case of swinging the starting handle, being ready to let go if the engine decided to 'kick back'.



1924 Bristol 2-ton with single front door

The first bus to pass through Snydale had a road lamp positioned centrally above the windscreen. This was eventually replaced by a destination box, illuminated at night. Narrow, black painted destination boards, lettered in white were clipped to each side of the bus. Solid tyres running over sets made it rattle like castanets.

The West Riding livery was green, with white upper and top. Lettering and fleet numbers were in gold, shaded red with wheels in Post Office red.

Snydale was on the West Riding Dewsbury-Wakefield-Pontefract-Knottingley route, starting behind the Town Hall in Dewsbury. The Wakefield to Pontefract-Knottingley stand was in Cross Square, outside Timpson's footwear shop. Opposite, and a little further, was the West Riding waiting room and parcels office.

On the return journey, the Dewsbury stand was outside Mathias Issac Eggleston's drapery emporium next to the Black Rock public house at the top of Cross Square. Mr Eggleston was a city alderman, and from time to time in summer, voiced his displeasure with regard to bus exhaust fumes being wafted through the open door of his haberdashery department!

The Pontefract stand, for both directions, was near the

Turk's Head public house in Market Street, and the Knottingley terminus was near the canal.

This new 'green' bus, giving a two hourly service, continued to trundle back and forth through Snydale at the maximum speed of 12mph, adding to the traffic flow of the milkman's horse and float, a shire horse and cart delivering concessionary coal to miners' homes (at four shillings a ton), and horse drawn farm traffic.

From time to time, a Leyland RAF-type lorry and trailer loaded with wool bales bearing the legend Henry Long and Son, passed through the village on its way to Bradford.

The bus fare from Snydale to Wakefield was eight pence single, with a doorstep pickup for Saturday shopping, although it was standing room only when Featherstone Rovers played Wakefield Trinity at Belle Vue.

Former railway patrons in Streethouse forsook steam, wended their way to the station, walked the length of the platform and took the cross-country path to Old Sharlston to 'catch the bus'. The new experience had an added bonus of being transported right into the city centre of Wakefield.

In due course the green Bristol bus became part of Snydale's way of life. Ted and Harry (regular drivers) waved to the girls, who no doubt, thought that they were the only girls Ted and Harry waved to. Commuters commuted and miners, homeward bound and still in their 'muck', kept to the back of the bus and smoked thick twist tobacco and Woodbines.

For the village children, there was little intrusion to tops being whipped, hopscotch hopped, shuttlecocks shuttled and boys propelling steel hoops with a fearsome velocity from one end of the village to the other.

Competition Arrives

About twelve months after the start of the West Riding service, there was an intrusion, when a single deck bus turned the corner at the Featherstone end of the village – not green but liveried in maroon with 'Motor B&S Service' emblazoned in gold on each side. Bus life was never going to be the same.

The bus that appeared was a front entrance RAF-type Leyland, solid tyred 30-seater, fleet no. 11, scheduled to run between Wakefield and Pontefract every two hours. This meant running one hour in front and behind the West Riding service, with the Snydale fare reduced to five pence.

The West Riding was furious, and immediately ran an extra Bristol to shadow the B&S Leyland, with the result that the straight stretch of road running through Snydale became a daily 'Grand Prix' with the Bristol and Leyland making a race of it from one stop to another. There was no lack of encouragement from the roadside!

Eventually it came to an end, possibly due to intervention on the part of the Wakefield Public Transport Authority or equivalent. Both operators agreed to each running a half hour service, giving the public a quarter hourly service. Tops, hopscotch, shuttlecock and steel hoops had to be timed accordingly.

The B&S fleet no. 11, was one of a growing fleet of buses founded by John Bullock, the Featherstone ex-miner who had run the Sunday only char-a-banc service. The first depot was in Wilson Street Featherstone and a second one was opened in Saville Street Wakefield. A second garage was built further along Saville Street. It was here I started work as a conductor in 1928.

The launching of the West Riding Dewsbury to Knottingley service on Easter Monday 1922 meant the end of our train journey from Sharlston Station to Wakefield for Saturday shopping. This suited me, as the lengthwise passenger seat by the front exit door on the Bristol bus, gave me an unobstructed view of the driver at the wheel; my first driving lesson. Driving technique was rather unorthodox, as the clutch was disengaged when travelling downhill.

When the B&S appeared, and following the introduction of an integrated service, father continued to patronise the West Riding. It must have been the strict uniformity of vehicles and platform staff. Buses were exactly the same, uniforms were matched dark blue, with green piping. Ticket punches were exactly alike, as were the cash bags made in Horbury. The green Bristol commanded attention. Time keeping was assured, drivers having five shillings (25p) stopped out of their first wage packet to pay for the pocket watch.

With the coming of the bus, I was appointed mother's errand boy at the age of eleven. My shopping missions after tea took me to Wakefield and Featherstone, with strict instructions to travel West Riding.

On one particular warm summer evening I was dispatched to Wakefield to deliver a parcel. My bus was one of the second batch of Bristols acquired by West Riding and had Strachan and Brown body with front entrance only and pneumatic tyres. I took a seat on the offside, halfway down the aisle, the parcel beside me. There were three other passengers.

Midway between Old Sharlston and Crofton, my parcel started to slide off the seat and landed in the aisle. I reached over the edge of the seat to retrieve it. It continued to slide under the opposite seat. I found myself sliding in its wake, coming to a halt with my head in close contact with the body panel. I heard voices of concern. Welcome hands eased me out from under

the seat. The floor of the bus was at an acute angle. My progress between the seats, towards the exit door was done at a crawl into the arms of the driver. When my parcel started to slide, we were crawling at the statutory 12mph. It was at that speed when the Bristol edged over the grass verge, down a grassed embankment, and was brought to a halt by a shrub and tree.

How or why it happened I never knew, the slow speed, and a barmy summer evening - soporific for bored bus drivers. The next West Riding bus took me and my fellow passengers into Wakefield.

My association with B&S buses, both as a fare paying passenger and paid employee, began in April 1925 on leaving school. I was press-ganged by the eldest of my three sisters into taking an appointment with M.I. Eggleston, draper, haberdasher and soft furnishing, Cross Square, Wakefield.

I wanted to be a mechanic, and could prove I had the natural ability to be one but was completely ignored, as my sister 'knew what was best for me'.

Thanks to my employer, I obtained a B&S monthly contract for seven and sixpence (37.5p) with unlimited travel between Snydale and Wakefield. Two years and three months later, when I left, it was the same price. I travelled four journeys a day, going home for lunch, and was to discover buses came in a variety of shapes and sizes following the purchasing policy of B&S having bodies built by various suppliers.

To be continued

Book Reviews

HIGHLAND

W J Milne
Venture Publications Ltd, 123 Pikes Lane, Glossop Derbyshire, SK13 8EH
ISBN 978 1905 304 189 128pp softback. £17.95

No.15 in the Super Prestige Collection is devoted to the history of Highland Transport Ltd and Highland Omnibuses Ltd – essentially the period 1930 to 1991.

The Inverness-based Highland company, under its successive names, fully deserved to have its story written, but that task would never be easy. Making some allowance for difficulties of research, the overall impression is a good, worthwhile book. The amount of material gathered on the vehicles is excellent and the photographs are plentiful. It is a pity, however, that virtually all are of a bus, rather than a bus and its setting. Street scenes in Inverness, Dingwall or Thurso and buses in remote places would have helped to evoke the area.

In the history of the companies' development, operators taken over and the territory covered, one is given basic facts, but that is all; the book does not pretend to be a full, rounded history. Even so, it could easily have offered background to Highland's venture on to the Island of Skye in 1930 and the reasons for its retreat there in 1935; it could have assessed the long tenure and achievements of Wilmot H Fowke as General Manager from 1930 to 1952. Another page or two might have helped to evoke the territory, the problems of serving it and the traffic that buses in such unpopulated areas could generate.

So, the book is to be welcomed as a serious attempt to chronicle the history of this remote operator; a pity that its vision was limited.

Roger Atkinson

A HISTORY OF THE BIRKENHEAD MUNICIPAL BUS UNDERTAKING

T B Maund
The Omnibus Society Provincial Historical Research Group
ISBN 978 0 901307 66 8 186pp softback £19.95

Although it is a soft-back publication, this is a thorough, heavyweight history - precisely what one would expect from that seasoned historian, our member Bruce Maund, operating on home ground. Be assured that it contains all the reliable detail that you could wish for, so this review concentrates on the wider, general historical interests that are brought out in the Birkenhead story.

One can see both the parochialism that opened the gates to the creation forty years ago of the Passenger Transport Authorities, with their claimed wider regional vision. But it also evokes the now frequently mourned, (in retrospect), merits of local municipal pride which created a bus service and a bus fleet fiercely individual to Birkenhead and beloved by its residents. There is in parallel, a wonderful story, particularly in the 1920s, of the conflict between competition and monopoly - Birkenhead trying to keep Crosville out, terminating their services at the municipal outer tram termini, Crosville striving for their buses to reach the ultimate road destination of many of their passengers, the Woodside Ferry. Minimum fares on Crosville buses in Corporation territory, capitation payments, through bookings to and from the ferries were all facets of this struggle and the modus vivendi finally achieved.

The book provides a wealth of ammunition for both sides of the arguments for and against regulation, and

for and against larger and larger regional authorities that can take in the whole picture. Whichever stance you embrace, buy the book and extract the examples that suit your viewpoint; you will find plenty, and be able to bamboozle (or bore) your audiences by citing irrefutable instances. Birkenhead had them all. Draw your examples from the Mersey Railway Company, from the antics of Lower Bebington and Bromborough Urban District Council, from the arguments as early as 1938 for a Merseyside Joint Transport Board, from problems that would arise if buses were to run through the Mersey Tunnel in competition with the Corporation's own ferry boats. Details of relations not only with the big company, Crosville, but with the neighbouring municipality, Wallasey Corporation, and who should serve developing out-of-town estates, can also be found in this book.

The fact that it is almost forty years since the Birkenhead and Wallasey buses were subsumed into the then 'obvious' solution, Merseyside PTE, does not make this well written, thoroughly researched book wholly irrelevant to present day political thinking. (There can be lessons to be learned from history). Politicians are dipping their toes in the pool of 'localism', whilst at the same time urging upon conurbations ring upon ring of congestion charge zones. Is the concept of parking your car at a zone boundary in an eco-approved car park in say, Prenton, and taking a Wirral Borough Council-liveried (but contractor-operated and congestion-charge subsidised) bus into Liverpool via the Tunnel, too wild a flight of fancy for say, 2015?

The book is available at £19.95, post-free, from our member D S Giles, 7 Leonard Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7NL.

Roger Atkinson

THE BURNEY STREAMLINE CAR

Bernard J Nield
Howden Civic Society, c/o 40 Northolmby Street, Howden, DN14 7JL.
ISBN 978–0–9557145–0–4 38pp softback £7.00

This slight volume recalls a motoring initiative which, though it never progressed to large-scale production, did have an influence on the shape of cars to come.

The book is loosely structured but very readable, telling a little about the designer and his objectives. How the idea for a streamlined car originated, the design itself, building and testing of a prototype, setting up of a production facility, people who bought the cars and their reactions to it, promotion of the concept, demise of the company and later cars built on similar lines.

The book has its origins in the Streamline Cars Ltd sales brochure and a pamphlet produced in the 1980s, to which some fresh information and photographs, several previously unpublished, have been added. Its purpose is to draw together available material in a brief account. A considerable amount of research is in evidence, including contact with descendants of some of the personalities involved. There is a forward by the designer's grandson and an appendix devoted to the prototype, with drawings, and details of design and construction of the production cars. There is a list of all identified cars made. There is a quite extensive bibliography, a brief chronology and an index.

The images in the book give us a fair idea of what the Burney Streamline looked like - not particularly handsome with its humped back, snub nose and engine cowling projecting from the back of the car.
Its appearance was in total contrast to the stately Rolls Royces and Diamlers of its period and the two NS-type buses that appear in the background of a picture of a Streamline in Piccadilly.

No Burney Streamline has survived, so we cannot hear for ourselves what the cars sounded like or experience the ride. But the book does give some contemporary descriptions of a phenomenal absence of engine noise and vibration, rapid gain of speed, progressive loss of the consciousness of 'any mechanical means being used to propel it', outstandingly good springing and road holding. The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) bought one in 1931 at a discounted price of £800, down from £1,500, and later recalled that it did not climb hills well and had a habit of stalling and refusing to start, while having the engine at the rear made the car uncomfortably cold.

Paul Jefford

TRANSPORT ECONOMICS, THEORY, APPLICATION AND POLICY

Graham Mallard and Stephen Glaister
Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, RG21 6XS
ISBN 13: 978-0-230-51688-5
315pp softback £34.99 - hardback £65.00

While this is a serious and invaluable text on the subjects set out in the title, refreshingly free of equations and 'macroeconomics', it has to be said that the opening chapter, *Setting the Scene*, has to be treated with some reserve as history. Under 'Roads and Automobiles' the section on the expansion of public transport can only be said to be shallow, recording a few dates but failing to explore their real significance. The section on Buses could be said to be misleading in its brevity, not least in its treatment of the Road Traffic Act 1930 and its consequences. Similar criticism applies to the section on Freight Transport. It is a pity to find these weaknesses

in a book which will be used by students (including my own) who will not therefore come across the important issues involved in the public road transport industry.

John Hibbs

VILLAGE BUSES OF EAST DORSET

Peter Roberts
Country Bus Dorset Series, 22 Deira Close, Quarrington, NG34 8UR
A4, 50 pp, softback, £6.00 inc p&p from author.

The country lanes of East Dorset were for many years more congenial territory to small independents than to the big companies that served the few main roads, and linked the market towns of Blandford and Wimborne with bigger towns nearby. Peter Roberts, who knows the area well, himself once drove for one of the independents.

He gives a vivid account of a Saturday morning journey by Stanbridge Motor Services into Wimborne, picking up villagers on the way. That was only 30 odd years ago: by then the Saturday evening bus into town so rural folk could go to the cinema was already a thing of the past. Television and private motoring had put an end to what had been a regular feature of country bus operation in the 1930s and in the early post-war years.

The book is in two parts: the first focuses on villages up the River Allen from Wimborne - Crichel and Witchampton. Here in 1921 Ernie Toomer was the first in a succession of independents. What remained of their operations in the 1990s was absorbed by Damory Coaches, a subsidiary of what is now the Go Ahead-owned Wilts & Dorset Bus Co Ltd. Up on Cranborne Chase, there was more call for buses to Salisbury and Blandford. One independent there kept going from 1921 until 2005. That was Adams Bros' Victory Tours, based in the delightfully named village of Sixpenny Handley.

Roberts gives a good account of the history of each of the concerns that he describes, and focuses on the services they ran. This gives the reader a flavour of how they set about making ends meet, whether by school contracts, market services, private hire, outings to the seaside, or, later on, longer-distance touring under contract to other operators.

His own personal memories and those of others he talked to bring alive the atmosphere of rural bus operation between the 1930s and the 1970s. Fleet lists of some of the operators make no pretence of going into great detail, but they create a clear image of the type of vehicles that were used.

Roberts also runs his own "Country Bus" website at www.countrybus.co.uk.

Andrew Waller

BERE REGIS & DISTRICT. THE STORY OF THEIR BUS SERVICES

Peter Roberts
Country Bus Dorset Series 22 Deira Close, Quarrington, NG34 8UR
A4, 50 pp, softback £6.00 inc. p&p from author

This is the second in the author's 'Countrybus Dorset Series'. It does exactly what the title says, narrating and explaining the rise, and decline, of the firm from its modest beginning in 1929 with a 14-seat Ford Model T. Through a host of acquisitions of small undertakings in this scenic area of small villages, the fleet numbered 50 luxury coaches by 1956 and over 100 by the 1970s.

When he set up in business Reg Toop used the fleet name Pioneer. In 1930 the Road Traffic Act meant that stricter operating practice was essential and may have contributed to smaller businesses selling out to more entrepreneurial competitors. By selling his Bere Regis Motor Service to Hants & Dorset in 1930, George Vacher had opened the way for others to name their business along the same lines. When, in 1936, Toop went into partnership with Percy Davis of Bloxworth, and shortly afterwards with WJ Ironside, whom the author identifies as being the driving force of the business, they adopted the name Bere Regis & District Motor Services.

WW2 provided the extra transport demand that allowed expansion by numerous take-overs and the Bere Regis fleet grew to over 40. After the war, commercial requirements prompted the transfer of headquarters to Dorchester, which was more in accord with the geographical shift of their bus routes. Parcels traffic with dedicated vans was introduced at this time.

A fascinating example of joint working is recorded: Bere Regis coaches operating runs to the Midlands and the North for servicemen on leave would be hired by Wainfleet of Nuneaton to service the Coventry holiday trade to the south coast, then taking the servicemen back to Dorset at the end of their weekend leave.

Three personal reminiscences accompany the main text. That of Henry Frier, traffic manager from 1983 and general manager from 1993 illuminate the last two decades of Bere Regis.

Understanding the development of a complex network of services, largely in a rural area with numerous villages is greatly assisted by the inclusion of route maps and also timetable extracts. A chart records route changes between 1949 and 1979 and sixteen different vehicles feature in the accompanying photographs, though no fleet list or history is included.

Richard Storey

2009 CONFERENCE

An offer you cannot refuse

The Association embraces many aspects of transport history and so can offer a variety of related themes for its conferences. There might be a particular theme that would be close to your heart – but you keep waiting for it to turn up in the programme.

Now is your chance to tell us about it, because the committee has decided to offer you the chance to choose a theme for the 2009 event, which we would expect to hold in the autumn.

The only conditions attached to this 'free offer' are that you help us find the four speakers to give the presentations that would complement each other and together make up an attractive programme.

The committee would of course take care of all the administrative arrangements for the conference.

Grahame Boyes, the Association's Chairman, would like to hear from you either on 020 8940 8870 or g.boyes1@btinternet.com to talk over the possibilities.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

I read your interesting potted history of Clarkson Ltd. in the June newsletter of the R&RTHA (No.54) and would like to offer a correction. The Clarkson operated by A.H. Creeth & Sons of Nettlestone, Isle of Wight, finally ran as a steam bus in September 1922.

I have copies of correspondence dating from 1950/51 between Mr. A.R. Creeth and Messrs. A.W. Monk and Charles E. Lee respectively confirming that this was the date of withdrawal by Creeths in this form.

The chassis concerned was a former coke-burner, purchased in poor condition in October 1919 and Creeths removed the 'hedgehog' thimble tube boiler and substituted a horseshoe tube boiler as fitted to those in London for use with paraffin fuel.

The vehicle was fitted with a double deck body consisting of a 'torpedo' type lower deck, possibly a former charabanc, surmounted by the top deck of an ex-Metropolitan Steam Omnibus Co. Double-decker.

It was registered DL 1614 as a 'National', entering service between Seaview and Ryde in 1920. After withdrawal at the end of the 1922 season the body was removed and fitted to a Dennis Subsidy petrol engined chassis for the 1923 season, but appears to have been an ill-fitting match with very little space for the driver.

The Clarkson chassis lay disused for a while, but was then fitted with a Dennis petrol engine and gearbox and a home-built open single deck body with a hood and a centre gangway (like a char-a-banc without the individual side doors) licensed to seat 32 passengers. In this form it ran until the end of 1929.

Upon the acquisition of Creeths bus service by Southern Vectis O.C. in January 1930 it was laid aside until sale to A.E.C. Ltd. in part-exchange for new vehicles in July of that year.

If the terms of the sale were adhered to the body was probably removed and scrapped to prevent possible reuse on the Isle of Wight. The vehicle was sold by A.E.C. to W.G. Curtis of West Wellow, Hampshire in January 1931, being last licensed (still given as a 'National') in November 1933.

Regarding the letter from Andrew Johnson, I remember my aunt having an altercation with a Southern Vectis conductress in the mid-1950s over her grandchild's good quality folding pushchair which was fitted with a pram-style hood.

The conductress said it as it had a hood it was a perambulator, not a pushchair, and she would refuse to allow it on the bus in future. Agreed it was a rear entrance single-decker without luggage space, but although cumbersome, the pushchair folded down and could be carried.

I never heard the term 'buggy' being used in those days, except on cowboy films, i.e. horse and buggy.

Patrick Hall

EDITORIAL REQUIREMENTS

Contributions by email attachments, on CD or paper by Royal Mail. Photographs accompanying articles should be scanned at 300dpi as jpegs, or sent for me to scan and return. Members with photographs, particularly passenger vehicles, they'd be prepared to share if needed, please let me know what you have available.

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