

The Roads and Road Transport History Association

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Palladium Autocars Ltd

Roy Larkin

Palladium started building motor cars in 1912 at West Kensington in West London. Commercial vehicle production began in 1912, and in 1915 the company moved to larger premises in Felsham Road, Putney, South West London.

Initially the range consisted of a 25cwt, 30cwt, two 3-ton models designated YA and YB and a 3/4-tonner, YC. By 1916 the small vans had been dropped from the range as Palladium concentrated on the larger models which were more suitable for the war effort.

Dorman engines, which had gained accreditation for the subsidy scheme, were used prior to 1920 when they were replaced by the Continental engine. A 4-speed gearbox was used with shaft drive to a worm drive rear axle.

Curiously, in 1917, two 3-ton models, now designated YE and YD were built with no apparent difference between them except that the YE weighed 58cwt and the YD, 59cwt. The YE was also £65 cheaper at £695. Both YE and YD had 14'00" wheelbases and 21'6" overall length. A 4-ton model, the YDD, with 14'8" wheelbase and weighing 60cwt, costing £895 completed the 1917 model range.

There is no record of any lorries built during 1918 and by 1919, only a 4-ton YEE model was being built which cost £1085.

Double cantilever rear suspension was available as an option, consisting of two eight-leaf steel springs mounted one above the other on either side of the chassis. Intended to appeal to bus operators, a handful of so equipped chassis were supplied

as double-deck buses to Road Motors Ltd. of Luton.

The post-war years were difficult for all the manufacturers, especially small volume makers, due to the growing number of companies reconditioning war surplus lorries bought from Slough.

Palladium, whose chassis were expensive, having risen to £1185 in 1921, compared to the numerous rebuilt lorries, whose price was falling as more and more sought buyers.

Reducing the price of their chassis to £940 in 1922 and to £740 by 1924, failed to find customers at a time when reconditioned war surplus Daimlers, Thornycrofts and Leylands etc. could be readily purchased for £300.

Palladium, like many others, were unable to stave off the financial difficulties that forced the company to close in 1925.



Palladium with Dorman engine seen here clearly marked as 'On War Service' during the Great War - Chris Salaman

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Editorial

Your newsletter has a new title. The committee felt that Journal reflects the content and gives the Association the gravitas it deserves.

That's entirely due to the support I have had as your editor. There's no time to rest on laurels, the only way to ensure your Journal continues its varied content is with your sustained help.

I am grateful to all past contributors and equally grateful for all the offers of articles. I look forward to the day when those offers become a valuable and valued contribution in these pages.

Thank you to all the contributors who have provided a wide diversity of articles from eras ranging from the 18thC to the 20thC and from politics to research. Anniversaries provide the inspiration for two pieces and

will hopefully prompt everyone to consider anniversaries as topics worthy of recording in the Journal in the coming year.

The eagle-eyed among you will notice that my own name appears all too frequently this time. It is your Journal, not mine, so hopefully some new names will feature in future.

The Association has a rich wealth of knowledge and experience but has reached a point where this needs to be coordinated. The strength of any Association is its members, but that strength can only be fully realised when individual talents and experience are pooled together.

To help carry the Association forward to an increasingly bright future, two important roles need to be fulfilled by somebody reading these pages. Please see Page 17.

Association Matters

The Association extends a warm welcome to new member, Nigel Harrison.

The date for the September Members' Meeting is 26 September 2009.

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Roads Policy in the Age of Reform

Dave Bubier

Loosely the period between 1780-1850, the 'Age of Reform', was the period when the growth of industrialisation led to increasing demand for a wide range of improvement to society in general and the manner in which government was conducted.

In Britain the pace of change was held very much in check by acquiescence across the political spectrum to avoid the risk of outright revolution, as in France, and through a lengthy period of war. Only thereafter were there moves towards grudging compromise as pressures increased and, ultimately, a curate's egg of reforms were to be achieved that at least provided the building blocks for the future.

Politically the period was dominated by the Tory party, representing the landowning establishment, but governments were anything but stable, frequently changed, and there were brief periods of opposing Whig administration. Post-war, there was a longer and more benign period under Robert Jenkinson, Earl Liverpool, an arch mediator, from 1812-27 but succeeded by hard liners, such as Wellington, who held that the then parliamentary system of rotten boroughs and purchased patronage was as 'near perfection as was possible to achieve'.

It gave impetus for the more radical Whigs, disciples of Charles Fox, viz Earl Grey and Lord Melbourne, to seize their chance of power during the 1830s and to reform the old order. Not to be overlooked is that the influence of the monarch was still strong at this period. George IV was inherently Tory in outlook but his brother, who became William IV, was more fundamentally of the Whig persuasion.

George IV's brief reign is often greatly underrated; he trod a careful line and was instrumental in seeing reforms achieved. Victoria, whilst initially mentored by Melbourne, swayed far more toward Tory influence in later years.

As regards roads it was those of Scotland and Ireland that first became noted for their improvement, driven by political and military necessity in both cases. Successful road making experiments planned by expert engineers, such as Telford and Abercromby, using full time (thus skilled) labour began to make a telling contrast to the situation in England. It was something not lost on parliamentarians when en-route to Westminster.

At a time of increased usage and greater demand for communications in general, many of the 18thC Turnpike Trusts were deemed barely passable and their multiplicity as well as differing standards could make for a variable journey. Goods tonnage rose, public coaches multiplied and the postal service evolved.

With discontent growing, the first House of Commons Committee on Roads Policy was set up in 1806; it and its successors were to sit almost without interruption until 1830.

Two important bodies, the General Post Office and Board of Agriculture, had great influence. The former was particularly exercised by the Holyhead Road, the primary route to Ireland, where 'extreme inconvenience, difficulty and danger in travelling it' led the Postmaster General to turn, in 1810, to Thomas Telford (1757-1837). Telford was a stonemason who since 1803 had been making his name working for the Commissioners of Highland Roads.

Comprising 194 miles and 23 separate Turnpike Trusts, those in England were persuaded to let Telford have a free hand to amend the line of route and improve the surface. The six Welsh ones, covering the most difficult section, were replaced by a single body that required an 1818 Act of Parliament.



Typical road making scene from an unidentified painting.

This was steered through by Sir Henry Parnell (1776-1842) an Irish Whig politician who himself became an expert on roads and wrote the best contemporary account of the subject – *A Treatise on Roads*, 1st edition 1833 and 2nd 1838. Costs of the improvements were met by a 50% increase in tolls that reverted to the Commissioners for the Holyhead Road.



John Loudon McAdam

Meanwhile, back in 1806, the Board of Agriculture, inspired by Sir John Sinclair (1754–1835) had attempted a Bill on reforming Highway Administration that had led to the establishment of the subsequent committees. Best known for his *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 21 volumes (which introduced the word 'statistic' to the language), Sinclair remained at Westminster only until 1811 but he had invited communication from a wide spectrum of JPs, Turnpike Trustees and even cranks as to the way forward regarding improving the road system.

He introduced to the 1810 Committee a fellow Scot who wished to expound his views on a new method of making roads; John Loudon McAdam (1756–1836). Not an engineer as such but an administrator, McAdam had, since 1783, devoted his life to the study of road construction and administration and by this period was Surveyor to one of the largest Turnpike Trusts, in and around Bristol.

McAdam advocated the employment of a consistent smooth surface formed of graded stone rolled over a cambered foundation to allow drainage. He convinced the Parliamentary Committee to abandon the 18thC viewpoint that it was the use of the road that needed to be regulated to one of assumption that the road be made to stand the traffic. He held that maintenance required

competent, not casual, labourers and that supervision be done by paid professional surveyors.

He quickly became a permanent fixture, advising all subsequent committees and, along with his son, was effectively a consultant from about 1816. He travelled extensively to advise on these principles, the road surface bearing his name becoming the standard for all rural main roads throughout the 19thC.

His role cannot be underestimated. Had he not been listened to at this formative period the consequences may well have been unimaginable.

Despite all the strong advocacy of McAdam, Telford, Parnell, etc, 1810–1830 saw little further achieved beyond a few minor Bills to reform and consolidate the Turnpike Trusts; the political problems were insurmountable.

Telford surveyed the Great North Road, but fierce opposition from places sidelined by his proposed realignments stalled any real progress towards a repeat of his Holyhead Road success. Some rural roads, under the auspices of individual parishes, were actually considered to have improved as agricultural unemployment provided a greater pool of pauper labour to be deployed on them.

Not until the advent of a Whig administration with sufficient strength to back the zeal for radical reform was it possible to consolidate twenty years of discussion into legislation. Nonetheless roads, as always, were a low priority on one of the most far reaching Parliamentary agendas ever seen.

The General Highways Act of 1835 repealed all existing statutes applicable to roads other than Turnpike Trusts and ended the ancient obligation to render service by statute labour and team duty to one's parish - or otherwise pay someone else to do it!

All restrictions on wheels, weights, number of horses and lines of draught were silently repealed. An elected parish council, which could include larger towns and some boroughs, was empowered to levy by rate the revenue required for road maintenance, to appoint a paid surveyor and to hire labour. Provision was made for the formation of 'Highway Districts', combining parishes and pooling the services of both Surveyor and labour, but in practice this was little used as, inevitably, parochial jealousies came into play.

Whilst one can detect the urgings of McAdam and others, what the 1835 Act failed to do was address the calls for much larger areas of administration. It could have given the ultimate power to the County Justices, sitting in Quarter Session, who, whilst not elected at this period, formed the basis of the future County Council structure. Whilst this was done, quite successfully, in

parts of Wales the Whig party found it unacceptable to devolve powers to what was in essence very much a Tory institution.

Leaving autonomy resting with some 15,000 'Highway Parishes', who were virtually free from any external control or audit, may appear fundamentally flawed. Indeed it took half a century of tortuous progress to undo this choice of administrative unit and construct some form of 'Highway Authority' that was acceptable to everybody.

The thinking in 1835 may well have been that the new

wonder of the age, the railway, would totally eliminate the need for the main roads. Turnpike Trusts would wither and die (partially true) and it was only the purely local roads that needed to be taken into account.

An ironic twist to this story is that virtually everyone involved with roads in the early 19thC died within the three year period 1835 and 1837, Telford, Abercromby, Sinclair, McAdam all died. Only Sir Henry Parnell (latterly Lord Congleton) lived into the early 1840s but still died too soon to see the full consequences of the 1835 General Highway Act unfold.

Destination Blinds

Robert Williamson

The subject of destination blinds is vast and includes the methods and styles of printing, types of materials used and, not least, the contents and layouts of the millions of blinds produced over the past decades.

Although nineteenth-century photographs of trams with blinds have been seen they were not universally used and, indeed, many early bus operators used boards or metal plates. The London General Omnibus Company used boards (with printed paper displays pasted on) until the mid-1920s when roller blinds began to appear in greater numbers. Early Midland Red (B.M.M.O.) buses used paper labels pasted on metal plates and there was the long-lived practice by Eastern Counties Omnibus Company using the very heavy flip-over painted metal plates often termed 'Bible Indicators'.

Incidentally, not all blinds were known as such – Southdown M.S. always called them 'Screens', Bristol Omnibus Company 'Linens' whilst Bradford and Huddersfield Corporations termed them 'Destination Curtains'.

The improvement in blinds was a gradual process and although many operators used comparatively small, short blinds in the early part of the last century, the almost universal adoption of screen-printed roller blinds rapidly increased in the 1920s. Corporation trams still tended to have smaller blinds (with notable exceptions such as Glasgow and the London County Council) although a Leicester Corporation side blind, mounted inside the side windows, has been seen and measured 55 inches in width.

Motor-buses were still developing in size and reliability and the London Passenger Transport Board from 1933 continued the standard set by the LGOC in their final few years by having comprehensive blind sets front, rear and side.

The greatest total area of blind material displayed on a vehicle was probably the early postwar Eastern

Coachworks 'Tilling Standard' display of a 48"x 5" destination over a 48"x11" 'via' on front, nearside and rear.

After a while many side boxes were painted or plated-over for safety and costs grounds. Eventually, the total displays on ECW-bodied vehicles under the control of the National Bus Company were reduced to just a 30"x5" destination and a three-track route number - i.e. the absolute minimum.

Surprisingly, the last ten years or so have seen many new buses fitted with the largest displays possible (e.g. Optare Solos) but the problem with wide, deep blinds is that after long term use they tend to laterally crease and wrinkle. Nowadays routes and services change so often the blinds don't need to last long anyway.

It appears that early blinds were produced by marking out the letters in pencil and then adding the black surrounds. Some small operators did this up to the 1980s and some may still do so today. Many independents' coach blinds were made this way and even quite long bus blinds have been seen from the myriad Potteries independents. Why pay for a printed blind when you can make one in the workshop!

Early blinds printed by the Norbury family for Manchester Corporation used the linocut process, which was an early example of mass production. The basic principle was to positive-cut pieces of linoleum, leaving raised numerals, clamp a whole series to a large wheel (similar to a water wheel), then roll the wheel along laid out linen to produce negative white on black numbers.

Cutting with a knife made it too difficult to obtain uniform curves on linoleum numbers and that is why Manchester blinds had chamfered-corner characters. This style lasted with screen printed blinds into the 1970s.

Some operators made a proportion of their own blinds

using the method of placing brass letters on rolled-out linen and spraying with black ink. Eastern Counties, Eastern National, United Auto Services, United Counties and West Riding Auto all produced some of their blinds in this fashion whilst several others made short inserts for service changes etc. London Transport was unique in that their blinds were made by sticking pre-printed paper bills on to a thin cotton material. Cheap to produce but they did not stand up to long term use, particularly the destinations. From 1980, considerable quantities of blinds for London Transport were made by McKenna Brothers of Manchester with the last traditional London Transport blinds made in June 1988.

As time passed and with the growth of public transport particularly during the war and the late-1940s, screen-printed blinds became big business and several firms were founded or expanded to meet the demand. Norbury Brothers and T. Norbury & Co. (same family, but different firms), King & Flack (of North London), and Kelbus were all prolific producers but sometimes operators had to turn to smaller companies such as The Whitlay Tool Co. (of South London) to provide a few urgently needed blinds.

A considerable number of blinds exist with an 'ECO' stamp on the white ends. ECO (The Equipment & Engineering Co.) are not known to have ever made blinds, although they did make the winding equipment, and the work was put out to printers, mainly it appears, King & Flack.

Today most blinds are made by McKennas and Norbury Blinds Ltd of Birmingham. Mr Norbury sold the business and the name about ten years ago.

From 1978 onwards, new material called 'Tyvek' began to replace the by now expensive linen. When first seen it appeared to be toughened paper but is in fact a polymer which can be made to any thickness required. This meant that many more displays could be included on a roller blind which up to that point had been restricted owing to the bulk of the linen. Some of the earliest Tyvek blinds are very thin and have started to crumble and disintegrate. This is not every Tyvek blind but may

occur in the future with many others. In the last thirty years there has been greater use of thin plastic and similar materials which together with Tyvek account for most blinds today.

Greater use of different colours is used nowadays which was a comparative rarity when most blinds were white on black. Some old examples are the white on red display used on Bournemouth allocated Hants & Dorset buses reading 'NOT ON SERVICE FOR BOURNEMOUTH CORPORATION PASSENGERS', shown in the 'via' box and the Barton, Chilwell display 'SCHOOL BUS' which was white on yellow. Wallasey Corporation had red on white displays for some destinations whilst Edinburgh Corporation had the almost unreadable red on black 'NIGHT BUS'.

Over the past twenty years, many different colours have been seen. Complete blinds in blue or green with the greatest variety on minibus services with grey, orange, brown and almost every other colour now being seen.

Recording the contents of blinds is important from the historical perspective where an operator is concerned and also from the socio-economic viewpoint, reflecting the changes in population, employment and other aspects. 'WORKS SERVICE' was very common and individual factory names were often shown plus the odd somewhat indeterminate one such as 'DYE WORKS' on Leeds Corporation trams.

Much of this has disappeared to be replaced by considerably more 'Housing Estate', 'Industrial Estate' and 'Retail Park' displays. Sporting venues come into this category with football clubs relocating and many stadia such as for greyhound racing being closed and demolished.

The foregoing is only a brief outline and the topics covered could be expanded to several pages each. It is trusted however this illustrates the vast number, endless variety and importance of recording destination blinds particularly in view of the ever increasing number of buses and trams with electronic displays.



A nice illustrated letterhead from the 1920s showing the lorry, charabanc and taxi which formed the backbone of Albert Schofield's business.

The heading also states: 'Funerals Completely Furnished'.

The included, illegible, invoice appears to be for 12 separate haulage jobs and is for £1.19.00.

Thirty Years of Globetrotting

Roy Larkin

It hardly seems credible that Volvo's Globetrotter cab was first seen 30 years ago. By 1979 my own career had progressed to Volvo F88/9s, DAF 2800s and Scania 111s, proper sleeper cabs that offered plenty of room compared to the British long distance motors. Comfortable as they were by the standards of the day, they were no match for the Globetrotter cab introduced by Volvo on its new F10/12 replacement for the F88.

My first encounter with an F12 was just after roping and sheeting 40 foot of foodstuffs, in the days when that was allowed. An F10 pulled into the same yard and the opportunity to see one close up was too good to miss. The driver confirmed it was every bit as good as the magazines claimed and within minutes I was sat behind the wheel.

The first thing that struck me was the quality of the fully trimmed cab finishing. Gone were the bare metal areas and rubber flooring, replaced with carpet and soft trimmings. The second thing was that everything fell exactly to hand. It felt more like a quality car than a lorry cab, and that was just the basic 'flat top'. It was a few months before I got to drive one in anger and that only confirmed what a good workplace it was.

The Globetrotter remained a rarity for some years, bought mainly by image conscious small fleets or as flagship vehicles for larger fleets. It was therefore a couple of years before I got to drive a Globetrotter. The first thing was the amount of storage cupboards and the feeling of empty space above your head. But, the real joy was finding it was possible to stand upright to dress and undress, even just to stand and stretch during a break without getting rained on. It was no surprise that DAF soon followed with their Spacecab built on top of their existing 2800 cab, although that still lacked the trim of the F12.

When the Globetrotter cab was launched, Volvo expected to sell only a few hundred cabs a year into a perceived niche market. It was anticipated that only the growing ultra long haul operators would be interested, presumably due to the weight penalty and extra cost. That was true in the early days but with more manufacturers including a 'high top' cab on their top weight models, more and more operators began using 'Globetrotters'. Thirty years later, Globetrotters are the norm with 90% of new Volvo FHs so equipped and it's

almost unheard of for any long distance cab to be a flat top. Indeed, many short haul tractors that never spend a single night away from base are now Globetrotters due to resale residuals.

From its inception, the cab was gradually upgraded, the gear splitter switch moved from the dash to the gearstick, the steering wheel shrank, electric windows and cruise control were added and the trim colour changed to a more neutral grey. More important, night heaters became standard fittings. It remained a good workplace until replaced by the FH cab in 1993.

The FH claimed to be another Volvo first. The first cab designed around the driver. A mock-up cab was taken to motor shows around the world and over 2,000 drivers invited to sit in it and give their views. In 1996, the Globetrotter gained extra height in the roof and an almost flat floor, making access between driving seat and living area a simple sideways step with no engine hump.



Volvo F12 Globetrotter belonging to Brian Yeardley who ran a large fleet of Volvos
- P. Davies

It's difficult to convey how significant the Globetrotter was, a bit of extra headroom doesn't sound much. But, the opportunity to stand up and move around with relative ease when living in the cab for 3, 4 or more weeks was truly significant. The chance to store belongings in cupboards built into the extra space instead of on the bed, to be moved every night and morning, did more to improve the life of the long haul driver than any motorway, satellite navigation, or anything else.

Buses and Politics in South Wales

Robert McCloy

This paper takes as its subject Merthyr Tydfil as an epitome of wider conditions in the interwar years of depression. It relates to a more comprehensive study examining local government's stewardship of road passenger transport focusing successively on the four county boroughs of South Wales: Merthyr in depression, Swansea in wartime, Cardiff in post war austerity, and Newport in a subsequent period of relative prosperity.

Merthyr Tydfil's brief boom was over: disaster loomed, only averted by another war. However, the collapse of industries sustaining settled communities accelerated the need for movement. Those believing in migration clashed with those demanding local solutions but both were bound by a realisation that the future would be one of greater mobility.

Events fall into three acts: a period of qualified optimism, albeit some feared insurrection, ending with the General Strike; one of Whitehall conflict lasting to 1936; and one of opportunism, propelled by war and a lately-pricked national conscience. Throughout was the common thread of mobility. The First War bequeathed the internal combustion engine, well tested, mechanics, and capital, to make cheap travel possible. Restlessness provoked by war, dispersal of employment and homes and the development of centralised amenities provided its market. A grimmer mobility thereafter beckoned: general war mobilisation.

Act 1: Hope, 1920-26

The tasks facing a hopeful council were demanding. The council sought economic regeneration, crucially recognising transport's role. Poor roads and relatively rudimentary vehicles curbed commuting but there was growth in longer journeys in search of employment and recreation, development being frustrated by lack of government grant and neighbouring council cooperation. Complementing the largely internal road travelling opportunities, mainly provided by the tramway and increasingly by the bus, the occasional seaside coach outing was now within the financial reach of all but the poorest.

The Merthyr Electric Traction and Lighting Company Limited, a British Electric Traction Company subsidiary, constructed and operated, under the 1899 Merthyr Tydfil Light Railways Order, tramways between Merthyr and Dowlais and Cefn Coed (services commencing in 1901). The system was well patronised, carrying in 1919, its peak year, 3,459,149 passengers. Thereafter, the system steadily declined, attributable to population loss, unemployment, and being displaced by 'the much quicker and equally cheap omnibuses'. Competition from private buses impacted

most heavily from 1927.

Employment in major industries could not be replaced by other local work. Some finding distant work discovered, after paying fares, they were better off if they were receiving unemployment benefit. Some moved to Slough, Welwyn Garden City, Birmingham and Coventry, where new industries were developing. The coach played its part, the pneumatic tyre being by 1921 a decisive spur. Migration resulted in Merthyr's deteriorating financial base. Surprisingly, the loss in population from South Wales by migration between 1921 and 1931 was considerably smaller than it had been in the periods 1901-1911 and 1911-1921.

There was thus a gradation in mobility: daily within the valley, effected by walking, bicycle, tram, railway, and increasingly, by bus; daily beyond the boundary, mainly to Cardiff and adjacent valleys, by railway and again, increasingly, by bus; for longer periods and often permanently, to England, by train and coach; and in permanent migration to the Empire and the United States, by, bus, coach and train, for the initial poignant stages at least, and ship thereafter. A further fateful step was seriously contemplated on the eve of war: the transfer of the town itself, presumably by lorry and much else.

Miners tended to travel to a large number of collieries often sited in small communities similar to those in which they lived. This criss-cross pattern of travel for miners, rather than the one-village one-colliery pattern, had been brought about by the closure of some collieries and the development of others. The flexibility of the bus and the fact that it could economically transport large numbers in small entities, relative to the train, gave it a particular utility in the coalfield.

The railway's advantage held so long as large numbers were to be transported from place to place. The trains' advantage was also assisted by its obligation to provide cheap workmen's fares springing from the Cheap Train's Act, 1883. Nevertheless, the train necessarily hugged the contours of the valley whilst the bus ascended its slopes. Rail was clearly yielding to road but the latter's inadequacy deterred the development of secondary industries and curbed transport possibilities.

The Establishment of the Municipal Operation

Such then was the context when the council embarked upon its bus operation. Provision had been added to the local parliamentary bill, enacted in 1920, to make this possible, albeit the Act protected the tramway. This legislation was not exceptional: similar Acts in respect of other South Wales councils had been enacted.

In 1923 the council's leadership decided to act. A vigorous council debate, the gallery crowded, petitions for and against the initiative, marked an exceptional occasion. The chambers of trade united in opposing, the trades and Labour Councils in supporting.

Councillor A. Wilson, proposing, observed that the bill had been revised to include bus operation and borrowing powers, provision in Aberdare, Caerphilly, Cardiff and other places in England, had been examined, and that high interest rates had earlier necessitated postponement. Wilson claimed that it was hardly the cause of a single party and that it was appropriate to consider rates per head (£3.19.6d. for Cardiff, £3.16.1d for Newport, £3. 12.6d for Merthyr, £3.14.4d for Swansea), buses would not be run for profit but for the use of the people, fares would be fixed to make the operation self-supporting, and the chamber of trade had itself advocated a challenge to the trams because of Merthyr Electric Traction's lighting charges.

Councillor L.M. Francis observed 'today there were over a thousand men unemployed...from the commencement of the unemployed problem the council had spent £110,000 on roads, which was not a profitable undertaking, but absolutely essential for the welfare of the people...' Francis claimed that Snow, a local bus entrepreneur, had offered to run the buses and anticipated they'd pay for themselves in five or six years.

The initiative's origin in the public works committee is significant. That committee's preoccupation was the promotion of schemes to engage the unemployed. The Borough Surveyor had submitted plans for 'providing work for the unemployed'. The programme included drainage works employing on average 165 men, the widening of the Cardiff-Merthyr main road, a number of schemes engaging some eighty men, and, in prospect, bridge widening at Swansea Road. The road works and bus operation were of a piece: a Keynesian approach that anticipated Lloyd George's prescription, considered below.

The evidence suggests that the often-made accusation of council hostility towards independent bus operators was an exaggerated claim. The Traffic Commissioners implied that an element of 'paranoia' existed. A snapshot of the council's treatment of local operators is offered by the council's deliberations in 1924. The watch committee having inspected three vehicles, one owned by Snow, the other two by E.T. Jones, recommended that the former's licence be renewed provided safety guards were fitted but that Jones be instructed to appear before the committee since 'in the opinion of the Mayor and Police, the two 'buses...are unfit for service'. Subsequently, the council agreed that Jones could operate the vehicles for a month whilst renovating them.

In September, six vehicles, 'which the chief constable

now judged fit to ply for public hire, were licensed for a period of one month'. A licence for a workmen's service between Merthyr and Merthyr Vale was also granted.

Following the decision to establish its own bus service the Chief Constable was asked to report on the number of vehicles plying for hire on the proposed routes, with an estimate of passenger numbers. He reported comprehensively and with alacrity, listing the twelve actual vehicles, departure details (every ten minutes to Aberfan, every forty minutes to Treharris), the number of buses checked, average loadings (rarely full), times of peak (Fridays and Saturday busiest days) and non peak use, and workmen's services. He advised that the traffic could be adequately accommodated by a twenty minute service to Aberfan and an hourly service to Treharris, utilising eight twenty-six seat vehicles. Two vehicles would suffice for a Sunday afternoon service.

Meanwhile, the public works sub committee, having inspected vehicles and the Town Clerk having obtained information from other councils concerning their experience with the particular models, recommended that 'eight omnibuses be purchased of a Standard type single-decker, 26-seater, two-men operated, solid tyres...' The bus bodies would be the subject of separate tenders. The question of workmen's services would await experience with the ordinary services.

Subsequently, the sub committee recommended the purchase of the Leyland model and, having negotiated with Leyland's sales manager, obtained a discount from £962 to £900 per vehicle. The sub committee also authorised negotiations with Snow concerning the purchase of his vehicles and with the Bute estate concerning land for a garage. The Town Clerk reported on negotiations for a temporary garage pending a permanent facility about which the Borough Engineer was to establish whether a recently acquired plot would be suitable and to prepare an estimate of building works. The purchase of the Snow vehicles was duly arranged following arbitration of terms by Horsfield, Cardiff council's transport manager. A sub committee was appointed to inspect types of bus body 'with the Borough Surveyor and Chief Constable'.

The flurry of activity was ceaseless: the Borough Surveyor soon reported terms for a temporary garage which were approved whilst he and the Chief Constable submitted a detailed report on staffing needs, having obtained information from other councils, which included general schedules of duty, overtime requirements and arrangements for maintenance and cleaning. They 'recommended that the Borough Controller... consider arrangements for fare collection and the handling of money... the Town Clerk to prepare draft bye laws for the operation....' They sought the committee's urgent consideration of a workmen's service, especially bearing in mind the additional

travelling resulting from the Dowlais and Penydarren pit closures. They recommended that consideration of a permanent uniform and the installation of a bulk tank for petrol be postponed until the new site was available.

The committee approved the proposals and the engagement of fourteen drivers, capable of running repairs, in accordance with national rates, the engagement of fourteen conductors 'between the ages of 15 and 18, to be terminated on reaching 19... unless a vacancy occurs... which can be filled by promotion', compulsory trade union membership, the employment of one cleaner, a Sunday service, and an obligation on drivers to report daily on the condition of vehicles. A 'closed shop', national rates, promotion by seniority, and Sunday operation were significant policy decisions.

Thereafter, it was the turn of the Borough Controller (treasurer): there should be a single depot wherein the Omnibus Superintendent would exercise control, vehicles would be garaged, cleaned, and maintained, staff would wait for duty, the Superintendent's assistants would work, and stores kept. A Superintendent 'will have some knowledge of the working of a similar department' should be appointed immediately who 'will be responsible for the initial organisation of the undertaking and its development', and who would require a competent clerk and traffic inspector.

The Controller listed the duties of the Superintendent and his clerk, set out the procedure for the collection of fares, reiterated the need to appoint a Superintendent 'so that his experience may be at the disposal of the Committee when considering the general scheme and appointments, and particularly as this official will afterwards be held responsible for the efficient working of the department...' Fares and stages, he considered, should be fixed to facilitate the printing of tickets but the issue of advertising on vehicles could be postponed.

The committee concurred, resolved that the service should ultimately be controlled by an independent department, and considered 123 applications for the Superintendent's post and selected four from, respectively, Colchester (D.F. Adey, subsequently appointed), Pentrebach, Merthyr, and Eastbourne) to appear before them. The sub committee approved terms for a temporary garage and sketch plans for a permanent garage of plain brickwork for thirteen vehicles and authorised the Surveyor to proceed with the work 'with all dispatch', and to take no action on representations from the Transport and General Workers Union, objecting to the employment of juveniles as conductors, and the Municipal Employees Union, concerning employees joining their union.

A newly-formed 'Municipal Omnibus Committee' duly met on 30 July, 1924, when they elected Marsh chairman and appointed Adey superintendent, and short-listed

four local applications for the post of mechanic from a field of thirteen.

The next day they fixed the service's and Adey's starting dates, decided to interview the garage framework constructor about his starting date, temporarily approved a schedule of fares and stages, authorised the Controller to order the printing of tickets, considered 115 applications for drivers, 118 for conductors, 168 for a cleaning post, and 'upon a ballot being taken... and subject to confirmation after appearing before the next meeting of the committee,' appointed fourteen drivers, fourteen conductors and a cleaner. All were local residents. On 8 August they finalised arrangements for the service's start and authorised the Surveyor to test the buses and approved contracts for the garage's building materials.

Adey attended his first meeting on 15 August, reporting completion arrangements for the service's start, including duty rotas, fare and time tables, and driver testing. The committee requested a bye law banning workmen 'in offensive clothing', approved buses' insurance cover, and authorised Adey to obtain tenders for fire extinguishers, which he and the chairman would determine. Illustrative of the approved fares are the following: Merthyr to Mardy Crossing 2d, to Aberfan 8d, and to Treharris 1/-. These fares lasted until 1949.

Meanwhile, S.O. Davies, then miners' agent in Dowlais, had written concerning the closure of the Tunnel and Fochriw Numbers 1 and 2 pits. He urged immediate consideration of relief works. The council postulated the building of a Bedlinog to Gelligaer road. Mayberry, representing the Ministry of Transport, suggested a funding bid for an extensive programme of works because of the large number of unemployed.

Adey reported on the question of season tickets for which there had been a significant demand. Teachers, approximately sixty, travelling 'down the line as far as Treharris' could be attracted from the railway to the buses. Since the extra passengers could be accommodated in largely empty buses (the general flow in the morning was into Merthyr) provision should be met by issuing cheap six day tickets. The committee concurred. As far as cheap workmen's tickets were concerned, Adey was unsympathetic: they were 'rarely provided elsewhere', provision could only be made by the workmen filling up vehicles, preventing ordinary fare-paying passengers from boarding, and possibly soiling upholstery. This politically difficult question was put to a sub committee to consider. A year later, it was decided to run buses daily for workmen between Merthyr and Treharris for which weekly tickets were to be issued at 4s. 9d. each, a minimum number of passengers having been guaranteed. (*The Times*, 10 January, 2007, reported that Britons spent 15 per cent of their income on transport, roughly comparable.)

The professional press reported favourably in September, offering its own rationale for the council's service: 'Merthyr Tydfil is...the latest authority... to undertake the working of bus services. Merthyr Tydfil has a population of close on 150,000 (sic), and it ranks as one of the largest towns in South Wales, being an extensive centre of the Welsh iron and steel industries, and its need, therefore, for satisfactory and efficient bus services is a factor of paramount importance...' The writer was especially complimentary about the superior seating, of a new advanced design, the interior varnishing and the 'most pleasing shade of scarlet lake' for the exterior.

In October, Adey reported on the first seven weeks: 104,718 tickets had been issued and 29,347 miles travelled. Vehicles generally had performed well. The Treharris and Aberfan routes were doing well, bearing in mind especially the 'opposition' on the latter. Though there were initial costs that would not be repeated and the new garage with its running costs to be taken into account, he and the Controller calculated that for the seven weeks ending 5 October expenditure amounted to £1,372 and receipts to £1,571.9.9d., leaving a profit of £199.9.9d. Adey prudently warned that 'we are likely to experience a trade depression for a period...and costs were not at their maximum.'

Members addressed policy: avoiding borrowing when interest rates were high, embarking upon the project, and whether it should be self-supporting. Officers reported promptly and comprehensively and offered unambiguous advice which was invariably followed. Therein the officers demonstrated a unity of corporate purpose. Adey had been externally recruited. The significance of this should be borne in mind in considering the severe ministerial censure made in 1933. (see Part 2 - ed)

Competition and Opposition

The popularity of the services was such that by 1928 it had become necessary to increase the fleet, was clearly challenging other local operators who complained that the council's vehicles were being used for private hire outside the borough, in contravention of the Act. E.T. Jones, who operated on the Merthyr – Aberfan, Treharris road, found competition from the council's own buses too much.

The council, in 1925, had sought to extend its operation to Deri and had applied unsuccessfully to Gellygaer council for sanction, claiming that the operation would be assured of between 300 and 500 daily passengers travelling the Deri collieries.'

Other operators crossing Merthyr's borders prospered. T.J. Jones and G. Bown, in 1919, had opened a garage in Brynmawr from whence they quickly and successfully

operated as the Griffin Motor Company, initially with luxury charabancs and then local bus services, notwithstanding the 1921 national coal strike, meeting unmet demand, undercutting the railways with penny fares.

Arthur Watts, in 1920, salvaging military vehicles and parts for resale and his own use and prompted by his bank manager complaining of tedious train journeys in the valleys, with his brother started an operation, shortly 'Valley Motor Bus Services', at Tredegar in 1922. The initiative was soon popular and vehicles loaded to excess. By 1925, the Griffin and Watts businesses resolved on co-operation rather than competition and jointly established Western Services Limited, under the management of T.J. Jenkins, running services between Tredegar and Blackwood, Oakdale, and Pontypool, and between Abergavenny, and Blackwood and Newport.

Meanwhile, the railways were coming to terms with road. GWR, after the railway grouping in 1923, the dominant railway in South Wales, sought to address the challenge by developing further an extensive network of motorbus services connected with its railway lines, initiated at the turn of the century. The statutory basis for this initiative was questionable, the railway company adopting a pragmatic view that it was unlikely to be challenged when so obviously meeting a public service.

An early move was a Neath to Pontneathvaughan service commenced in 1921, followed by development of routes connecting Carmarthen, Cross Hands, Ammanford, Pontardawe, and Neath, in 1923. In the following year, services from Neath were commenced to Seven Sisters, Banwen, and Tonna. In 1925, a depot was established at Pontypool with a service to New Inn, Panteg, and Griffithstown. In 1928, GWR envisaged purchasing many motorbus businesses: including the Caerphilly council undertaking; concerns in Barry, Cardiff and Swansea; and, of particular relevance to this chapter, Lewis and James (Western Valleys) Services, and Dare Valley Motor Services.

The market was changing: the bus boom of the mid twenties was over. Some operators were willing to sell and the GWR, to protect its core business, was willing to buy. Implicit was GWR's recognition that the public would select the motorbus for many local journeys, in preference to the railway, and that this could sometimes be in GWR's interests. Councils now contemplated abandoning their operations or sharing routes with the railway-owned services; or resolved not to embark upon operation, notwithstanding parliamentary assent.

Ministry of Transport Inquiries

In 1926 a Ministry inquiry into the applications of a number of local companies took place. The council had contended that an additional service, by Western

Services Limited, would cause congestion in the High Street. C. Davies and Sons also opposed the licences: their Dowlais to Abergavenny service would be jeopardised and they were the route's pioneers. After argument, it was stated that the council would not object to a service by Western Services Ltd. from Dowlais to Abergavenny but T.R. Jenkins, the appellant (who was also the South Wales Omnibus Owners' Association's secretary), contended, that such a route would not prove remunerative. He undertook to pass through Merthyr by a route prescribed by the council and not pick up passengers on the tram routes. The inquiry reserved its decision.

Taylor has observed that Western were unsuccessful in obtaining a licence to go beyond Dowlais into Merthyr but that Red and White, who embraced Western, were successful after the 1930 Act, by taking over the Celia Davies operation. Aberdare Motor Services Ltd. had

also appealed against the council's decision to allow an increased service on their Aberdare-Merthyr-Cefn Coed, and Aberdare-Merthyr-Brecon services – thereby providing a half hour service between Aberdare and Merthyr. The inspector 'suggested' that the watch committee should reconsider that case.

Phipps Motors, Glynneath, had proposed a service between Merthyr and Cwmgwrach. The council agreed to reconsider the application if furnished with the proposed time table and fares table. The council had objected to Imperial Motor Company's proposal for a half hourly through service between Merthyr and Pontypridd. Adey advised the inquiry that the council provided an adequate service to Treharris, and, 'an important point... the council had spent £20,000' on this publicly funded service. In this case, the Ministry again reserved its judgement.

To be continued

Getting Started on Research

Grahame Boyes

Repositories of transport archives:

This note is for those who have contemplated undertaking some historical research on an aspect of road and road transport history, but aren't sure how to get started. One way is to begin by investigating what records are held in institutions and are accessible to you. These may include:

The National Archives (TNA) and county record offices;

Local history centres/collections, which are often attached to larger public libraries, but may be separate institutions;

Libraries of professional bodies such as the Institutions of Civil Engineers and Mechanical Engineers, and university libraries;

Transport museums and local museums.

The smaller institutions should certainly not be ignored, since their archive collections are often little-known and can include some unexpected gems.

Before making a visit, check whether you need to make an appointment or take proof of identity and whether there will be a charge. (Also check that using a digital camera is allowed as this can save a fortune in photocopies and time - ed).

Details of most of these institutions can be found in TNA's ARCHON Directory www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/ but it is less comprehensive for smaller libraries and museums. The following websites may therefore be useful:

UK Public Libraries: <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ac940/ukpublib.html>

National Association of Road Transport Museums: www.nartm.org.uk/

Choosing a topic for research

If you are short of ideas on what to research, my experience is that, if you carry out a search as suggested above, it won't be long before you come across something that sparks off an interest. There is in fact a good argument for selecting a topic for which you have already found a body of research material, rather than choosing the topic first and then struggling to find relevant sources of information.

All research takes much longer than was imagined at the outset, because new leads are often identified as the research progresses. Start with a topic that you estimate will take no more than a few months - perhaps up to a year - to complete. Until you have built up some practical experience, avoid long-term, open-ended topics. Too many of these just lead to accumulations of notes and papers that end up in the dustbin.

What is to be the end result?

Historical research is a fascinating and agreeable, if sometimes frustrating, occupation. However, it is a pity if it becomes a mere self-indulgence. The aim should be to publish the results of research, for the interest of others and so that they have lasting value as a source for later researchers to build upon.

There are a number of ways in which the results of your

research can be presented. The one that you adopt will affect the way you approach the research.

You may envisage your task as collecting accurate data and presenting it, perhaps in tabular format, as a reference source for other researchers; the range of sources that will need to be examined is relatively narrow. Such work - provided it is brought to publication in some form, ideally with references to the original sources of the data - can have widespread value, saving much time by others in searching out or checking basic facts. The PSV Circle's fleet lists are models of such a work.

The next level of complexity, requiring the use of a wider range of sources, might be described as a chronicle of events, typically a presentation of the facts in a chronological sequence. Many articles in historical magazines are of this nature.

However, trained historians would argue that the purpose of history is not just to reveal the past, but to explain it; to allow us to understand past events against the background of those times and judged by the standards of those times.

The third level of historical writing is, therefore, analytical and comparative. Rather than just answering the questions 'what happened and when?', this level of writing asks, and seeks to answer, a series of more complex questions, such as: why did it happen?; who or what caused it?; why then?; how did it become possible?; what were its effects or consequences?

To answer these questions it may be necessary to make comparisons. For example, if you are writing about the practices of one company, how do they compare with others and why? Or how did road transport practices differ from those in other transport modes or other industries, and why? Obviously the sources needing to be examined are even wider, looking particularly for comparable work by other historians.

Sources for historical research

Having selected a topic for research,

Start with a literature search. This will allow you to build upon what has previously been written on your selected subject. It is also advisable to do some background reading, so that you already have a good idea of what you are looking for when you start the next stage.

Looking for documentary sources for your own researches - published material, archives, maps and plans, photographs and drawings - can be an exciting pursuit, and is more likely to be fruitful if you have not neglected the literature search.

Where relevant, search on the ground for surviving features, with the aid of large-scale maps of the period.

Oral evidence, e.g. from former transport workers, whom it may be possible to trace through a letter to a relevant local newspaper, or to a trade, company, trade union or family history society magazine.

Help from fellow researchers. Expertise available within this Association, including the representatives of our corporate-member societies, may be identified through the membership list. Or submit a query for publication in the Newsletter.

Making notes

Try to minimise the time and effort spent in abstracting notes. Particularly if researching a long way from home, it can be more economical to pay for photocopies, even at 40p per page, than to spend time extracting notes.

Some record offices and libraries allow users to photograph records and books with their own digital camera. Photographing records not only saves copying costs but also time. It becomes possible to copy everything without spending time reading with no financial penalty if it is subsequently deleted.

Don't extract large chunks of text verbatim, as this is a very time-consuming way of making notes. Make a series of short notes on the key points. But don't abbreviate them to the extent that they are open to more than one interpretation. Distinguish between intentions and achievements, between proposals and actual events.

Make careful note of the exact source of your notes. It is inevitable that you will want to return to check some details at a later stage. Don't forget to write details of the source on photocopies.

The two-column approach to note-taking is useful: the left-hand column for the extracted notes; the right-hand column for the source reference and for any reminder notes, such as queries that need to be followed up.

Leave space between each piece of information, so that the notes can be cut up and re-assembled in a suitable order. Some people use record cards for their notes to allow for easy sorting into a better order.

If notes are input directly to a lap-top computer, a two-column table format is still useful. Each piece of information is entered in a new row, with its reference in the RH column. The rows can easily be re-sorted later.

If note-taking has to be very disciplined to make maximum use of a visit to a distant record office, prepare a set of subject headings in advance and insert your notes under the relevant heading. This reduces the

possibility of omissions or duplication in your notes.

Some tips on writing up your research

When to start: Start the writing-up of your research at the earliest possible stage. This cannot be urged too strongly. Not only will this make the final task of writing much less daunting, but it will immediately highlight any uncertainties or gaps in the research that can be followed up while the matter is still fresh-in-mind.

The computer is of particular advantage here. In between visits to the library/archive, your notes can be progressively combined, extended, re-written and revised into a format that will fit into the final published version. This is particularly important if making two visits to a distant record office; writing up what you have learned from the first visit will reveal gaps that need to be investigated in the next visit.

Planning the structure of the written account: Start by preparing an outline chronology of events and dates. Again this helps to identify gaps in your story. Most written accounts are set out in a broadly chronological sequence, but do not pursue this too rigidly.

For some more-complex aspects of the story, it may help the reader's understanding if they are separated out from the main story and dealt with in their entirety in separate sections, rather than dispersed in a strictly chronological account. So the next step is to develop the chronology into a series of headings set out in the best sequence for leading the reader through the presentation of the facts and your discussion of them, through to your conclusions. The paragraphs that you are writing in parallel with your researches will be designed to slot in under the relevant headings.

This sounds like a neat three-stage process, but, of course, in reality it is a much more dynamic. The structure will inevitably need to be adjusted as you learn more about your subject. The important thing to note is that the paragraphs can be written in the order that suits your research; it is not necessary to start at the beginning and work through to the end.

In fact, the opening and closing paragraphs should probably be written last. Unless you have a better idea, it can be helpful to the reader if the opening paragraph is a distillation - a summary - of the whole paper.

Quotations have their place: like pictures, they can illustrate and enhance your text, but use them sparingly. A series of quotations linked by short pieces of author's text is not to be recommended as a way of writing history. Frequent quotations break up and slow down the narrative; they make it more verbose and tend to irritate rather than illuminate.

Two common difficulties: The first is getting started each time you begin to write. If the interval between writing is only going to be a day or two, some authors recommend that you should finish a session in the middle of a topic - even in the middle of a paragraph or sentence.

It is much easier to start the next session by picking up something left unfinished that you have been carrying in the back of your mind since the previous session. By the time you are ready to start on the next topic, your pencil - or computer keyboard - will be in full flow.

The second common problem is the accumulation of more material than can be fitted into the length limit set by the editor or publisher. This is often a good discipline. Don't feel that it is necessary to include everything that you know.

Remember Voltaire's saying: 'The secret of being a bore is to tell everything'. There are two solutions: narrow the scope of your article, changing the title if necessary; or omit some of the detail and present your account in less detail. The material that you cut out can be used for another article.

Finally, always set your finished article aside for at least a week. When you come back to it, you will be able to read it from a more detached viewpoint and will immediately recognise things that can be improved.

In addition, it is also wise to ask someone else whom you respect to give it a 'peer review' - to give you an independent critique, not so much on the accuracy of your facts (which, by now, you will probably know better than anyone) but on the way you have presented them.

A2A

Further to Grahame's list of resources mentioned at the start of this article, I increasingly find the A2A website a good starting point for any research.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

A2A (Access to Archives) is part of the UK archives network. The database contains catalogues describing archives held locally in England and Wales and dating from the eighth century to the present day.

I recently found records through the A2A database that are held at the London Metropolitan Archive. Searching the LMA catalogue on the LMA website failed to find the records found on the A2A website.

No doubt this situation will be resolved as archives continue to add to their online catalogues but until then A2A is an excellent starting point. - RL

Allenways Contract Fleet Memories

Roger F de Boer

1960 was my peak bus-spotting year. The same year, I became interested in private coach firms following a ride in an Austin CXB of George Cooper from Wellington to the garage at Oakengates where VIP treatment was received.

I remember a Leyland fire engine painted green, which was used as a towing vehicle. Bonneted, like a Dinky toy, it had replaced one of the Allenways early Leyland Lioness coaches, which had been cut down into a towing vehicle.



WKO 136 - 1956 Commer

The Passenger Transport Red Book, 1961, gave the Allenways fleet as 16 coaches. Thirteen Plaxton bodied Commer Avengers and three Duple bodied Ford Thames. The livery was mauve and ivory. In fact, the livery of the new Fords was alpine mauve and mushroom but I only remember the Commers in grey and green.

I encountered Allenways 10 years earlier when their livery was cream with light green flash. Only 4 years-old in 1950, I can remember travelling on their three-quarter deck Foden. It was intended to reach Harwich from Birmingham but following 2 punctures on its nearside front tyre, stopped half way. A familiar workhorse, the Bedford OB, hired from another operator completed the trip.

The two three-quarter deck Fodens were new in 1950 and launched at the Chateau Impney Hotel, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire. Unsuccessful, one Foden was soon sold and the other converted to a van.

By the time I first owned a camera in 1964, much of interest in the Allenways fleet had already gone but I managed to record some interesting vehicles between 1967 and 1969.

The first was WKO 136 in May 1967. It was a Commer which was new to Allenways in 1956. The Kent registration is due to the body being built by Beadle of Dartford. By November 1968, it had passed to a building contractor and sported a garish green and turquoise livery which had replaced the original black and cream. It was no longer used for passenger carrying duties and was actually in use as a goal for kick-about football.

On May 7 1967, I photographed LTA 929, which was an ex-Southern National Bristol Queen Mary coach with ECW body. It was parked at Stratford Place, Birmingham, Allenways usual parking place for contract vehicles.



LTA 929 - Bristol Queen Mary parked at Stratford Place, Birmingham

Also in May 1967, 963 CRE was photographed. This was a Leyland with Duple body which was ex-Greatrex of Stafford.

Known Contract Fleet

WKO 136 - Commer/Beadle - new to Allenways
 LTA 929 - Bristol/ECW - ex-Southern National
 963 CRE - Leyland/Duple - ex-Greatrex, Stafford
 PHW 950 - Bristol/ECW - ex-Bristol
 ECN 685 - Guy Arab/MCW - ex-Northern General
 ECN 689 - Guy Arab/MCW - ex-Northern General
 UHN 349 - Bristol/ECW - ex-Darlington
 SHN 216 - Bristol/ECW - ex-Darlington



963 CRE - Leyland parked at Stratford Place, Birmingham

Ploughing the M1

Roy Larkin

The beginnings of the motorway network created a need for the means to keep them free of snow and ice during winter months. Following the opening of the first section of the M1 motorway, the Ministry of Transport produced a specification for gritters, which was sent to various manufacturers in 1959.

The requirement was for an 8x6 chassis with a forward control steel cab. An Atkinson Agricultural Appliances Ltd, Clitheroe, Lancs spreader body was to be used. Plated weight was 24 tons.

This coincided with the opening of a new department at

the Scammell factory in Watford, Hertfordshire; Unit Construction. Headed by Ken Simonds, the Unit Construction department was conceived to make use of the group products, which had been available since the Leyland take-over of Scammell in 1955, as much as possible.

At the time, the only forward control Scammell cab available was the new Routeman Mk1 cab, which was plastic. With insufficient time available to develop a new cab, a compromise was offered to, and accepted by the Ministry. This involved setting the engine as far back in the chassis as possible, creating the snub-nosed appearance.



Scammell Gritter chassis cab seen on the M1, presumably before the M1 was opened

A new steel cab was built and the bonnet section taken from the Highwayman design. The unusual sloping windscreens were intended to prevent the build up of snow on the glass and thus improve visibility.

A huge front crossmember and box-frame was designed to carry the front bogie and plough mounting brackets. This needed to be strong enough to withstand the shocks that would be created by a lowered plough blade hitting any uneven ridges or raised surfaces at speed.

The front axle was Scammell's spiral bevel and epicyclic axle with the drive transmitted through constant velocity joints to the steered wheels. This was the axle already used in the Constructor. The second axle, which was load carrying only, was the Leyland axle used on the Octopus. The rear bogie was from the Constructor. This provided the 8x6 configuration, possibly for the first time. All four axles were braked using a dual system.



Completed Gritter posed on Hendon aerodrome in 1960

Leyland's 680 engine provided the power, driving through Scammell's six-speed gearbox coupled to a two-speed transfer box as used on the Scammell Super Constructor.

A sign of the times is that although only conceived in 1959, the first chassis cab was ready for testing in December of that year. The first completed lorry with the body was photographed during testing at Hendon Aerodrome in February 1960.

Only 7 gritters were produced by Scammell, all of them by the Unit Construction department at Watford. The

bulk of the Ministry of Transport order was fulfilled by Atkinson.

One of the gritters survived into the mid-1970's with the gritter body replaced with a drilling rig. This was operated by Rock Engineering of Durham who were involved with back-filling disused mines. The infill needed consolidating so was drilled and filled with concrete. The Scammell was taken from site to site on a low-loader as it was no longer road legal.

Association Vacancies

The Association needs to consolidate and increase its membership and thereby broaden the already wide range of experience and knowledge the Association enjoys through the membership.

Expanding the membership of the Association will not only secure its longevity but also provide continued variety and interest for both the Journal and Members' Meetings.

Consequently the Association is looking to appoint a Membership Registrar and a Publicity Officer. Neither position would entail joining either the Board of Directors or the committee.

The Membership Registrar would co-ordinate individual member's interests, research projects and expertise by liaising with members. Membership lists used to contain a wealth of information, but they are now out of date, so need updating for the benefit of all members.

The Membership Registrar would not be involved with collecting subscriptions or keeping the membership list, which is done by the Treasurer and Secretary.

The Publicity Officer would identify possible new members, especially Corporate Members and make

initial contact using the Association publicity material with possible follow-up contact. They would compile a mailing list of trade journals, universities, museums organisations and societies who might benefit from, or be able to advertise news of the Association's activities. This could be through the Association's publicity brochure or flyers provided for individual events.

Opportunities such as vehicle rallies and open days would be sought and arrangements co-ordinated to ensure the Association's presence at any event.

Please contact any of the committee members if you are able to help or with your ideas that might help.



The young whippersnapper gives the old staggers a hand - RL

Members' Forum

Ken Swallow

Extract from a letter from Jane Baillie Welsh Carlyle to her husband Thomas

The Carlyle Letters Online - <http://carlyleletters.org>

Liverpool, 27 September 1831, 'The coach I am booked in goes straight thro' by Knutsford Newcastle Lichfield and Northampton is called the *Royal Umpire*. leaves this at two o'clock - and reaches the Old Bell, Holborn, and *Golden cross*, Charing cross next afternoon at three. The first of these places (the Old Bell) seems nearest Tavistock Square by the map - so I shall get myself landed there - if you meet me it will be well but I shall do I dare say alth[o] by mischance it happen otherwise'



Print of the Umpire Coach - Liverpool Libraries Information Service

Dave Bubier

I fear I must take issue with Chris Salaman on some aspects of his reply (N/L 58, p18) to the points made by myself in N/L 57, p10. Perhaps it should have been mentioned that I was aware of the Worshipful Company of Carman, but there is a distinction between a Carman and a Carrier. This very much goes back to what I wrote in N/L 53, p11, and in the supplementary notes and illustration to the article on an 1880 Sussex country carrier in N/L 49, p5.

There is a great deal of mis-use of terminology as regards the pre-motor era in transport. A Carman was one contracted to haul a specific load or loads and the term could apply to either the proprietor or one employed as a driver of such a cart. Carman existed across the country, although perhaps primarily in urban areas. The difference in trade to that of Jobmaster was that the Carman kept to localised general haulage whereas the latter deployed his teams (of horses) to a wider range of vehicles, ie, cabs, carts, omnibuses, etc. The term 'carter' was used equally specifically, not as a

trade but the driver of a cart for an 'own account' employer, thus you see 'farm carter', 'grocer's carter', etc. Look closely and you can detect the origins of the licensing system introduced in the motor era with the 1930 Road Traffic Act.

A 'Carrier' had a very specific role, collecting groupage for small loads carried over a set route and acting as feeders into the long distance, broad wheeled wagons, as well as serving local market towns. Their ancient origins are evidenced by the laws of 'common carriage' that governed them and the whole organisation was surprisingly sophisticated.

The myths that have arisen around them are many, notably that they only carried passengers with their own goods - probably because they had no room for passengers. Another was that carriers 'invariably used tilt carts' - pity poor Dobbin who, perforce, was then obliged to stand in the shafts for many hours at the destination in order to permit loading!

The golden rules in researching the horse drawn era is to think things through, never try and relate to the modern age and certainly ignore what you see depicted in films!

Mention was made of the 'Express' carriers who arose during the railway era. They evolved to enable parcels to be transported over longer distances using the railheads as distribution points and the likes of Carter Paterson and Pickfords were to become household names. Ironically the first established and largest, Suttons, so disappeared from the public consciousness that they did not even figure in the Companion to British Road Haulage History!

Roy Larkin

From the Commercial Motor, August 15, 1922:

The Bridgend Council has decided, after many months hesitancy, to allow kerbside petrol pumps outside garages. There was strong opposition to the granting of the permits, the chairman failing to see why special grants should be allowed garage proprietors when the council had disallowed grocers' vehicles to load at the kerb outside their shops.

The council, in deciding to allow pumps, arranged to make an annual charge for the licence.

September Members' Meeting

The September meeting of the members of the Association will be held on Saturday 26 September at the Coventry Transport Museum, Millenium Place, Hales Street in the heart of Coventry with easy access from car parks and railway station. The start time will be the usual 11.00am.

Presentations are planned by Julian Stray - Letterboxes on Trams and Buses; John Edser - A Schoolboy's Memories; Dorian Gerhold - Towards a Business History of Stage Coaching - Bristol's Stage Coaches; Roy Larkin - The Written Word - Fact or Fiction.

The Vintage Taxi Association will have a display of 15 - 20 vehicles in Millennium Place. The event is to mark the 75th anniversary of the Austin Low Loader, 60th for the FX3 and 50th for the FX4. All of the vehicles were actually built in Coventry and will surely provide a display to interest everybody.

A warm welcome will be extended to members visiting for the first time and friends not seen for a while will discover the much improved refreshments facility, providing the opportunity to renew acquaintances in the comfortable surroundings of Esquires Coffee House.



Book Reviews

Integrated Transport - a Will-o'-the-wisp?

John Wylde.

John Wylde, 4 Osborne Road, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2HS. ISBN 978-0-9533502-3-0 181pp £14.95 post free.

This is a book with a very wide potential interest, and an important text for anyone concerned with transport. If you want to know what has happened since the start of the 20thC, you will find it here. It is a very useful book.

But it is much more than that, because it opens a question that needs to be answered: what do we mean by those tricky words 'integration' and 'co-ordination'? They have been around for a long time, and they seem interchangeable, so why haven't they happened - yet. As Professor Begg says in his Foreword, only John Prescott's White Paper of 1998 did anything - encouraging the switch from private to public transport - but there is more to it than that.

In his opening chapter, on page 14, the author goes to the heart of the matter. He finds three definitions of integrated transport; *service integration*, *operational integration* and *financial integration*. The first is what the user looks for, convenient connections between trains and buses, or different bus services, to make travel easier. Little is done about it, and bus/train connections are getting worse. The second is the operator's objective; the removal of competition, including competition between one firm's services, to reduce costs and maximise efficiency. The third is control of the financial demands of transport, particularly on the part of government. It is plain that the objectives of the latter two are in conflict with those of the first.

The book then consists of separate chapters on each decade of the 20thC, with a reference to the three kinds of regulation - or the lack of it. The final chapter is headed *The Millennium - Quo Vadis?* and consists of a deep and wide ranging study of the situation today. Each chapter consists of a review of what happened over the whole range of inland transport, and these will be of great value to beginning students and to readers unfamiliar with the story. The final chapter is a radical study of contemporary and future problems, which is a challenge to policy makers today. A telling passage reflects on the subject of *Competition Law - The Enemy of Integration* - interference with the first of the three objectives, which was expected to follow from deregulation. The author is unafraid of controversy, which is in itself one reason why the book makes such good reading.

My only serious criticism is the lack of reference to the Smeed Report of 1964, *Road Pricing, The Economic and Technical Possibilities*. It is surely the absence of point-of-use pricing for roads that is the biggest obstacle to integration. Today the objective of government, however far away it remains, it is surely road-use pricing (not congestion charging) that would mean a big step to integration in any meaningful sense.

But this reservation should not reduce the great value of the book, strongly recommended by Professor David Begg. The author's ability to record and criticise what has happened is outstanding. Anyone with a serious interest in the transport industry should get it and read it, and keep it to hand for reference.

John Hibbs

North Warwickshire

Peter Hale

The Omnibus Society Provincial Historical Research Group.

ISBN 0-978-0-901307-70-5 A5 40pp (illustrated) £7-95 post free.

From D S Giles, 7 Leonard Road, Westcliff-on-Sea SS0 7NL

The sub-title of this book, 'An Early Bus Business in the Midlands' is important. It makes clear that this is a book about a company absorbed by Midland Red more than 90 years ago; a company of which few readers will even have heard. The North Warwickshire Motor Omnibus & Traction Company Ltd., was based at Two Gates, near Tamworth and its existence spanned a period to which very little research has been devoted – the time after the motor bus had established itself as mechanically reliable, (say 1912), but before its presence became universal (the 1920s). It brings in the role of local Councils, not to mention the usefulness of one of its directors being a Nuneaton Town Councillor, and another the Mayor of Tamworth

The company was beset by lack of capital, and it was not long before the principal director, John Thornburn had a meeting with Sidney Garcke of British Automobile Traction (BAT). This rapidly led to an injection of BAT money, and to W.S. Wreathall, representing BAT, attending North Warwickshire Board Meetings. By 1917,

the strains of war and its shortages were badly affecting the North Warwickshire services. Wreathall was replaced by O.C. Power, the Traffic Manager of Midland Red, who had visions - indeed, firm intentions - of Midland Red being the dominant operator throughout the Midlands. When, in summer 1917, Thornburn's son, Robert, who was by then the General Manager of North Warwickshire, was refused exemption from call-up for military service, O.C. Power 'temporarily' replaced him, and the end for North Warwickshire was nigh.

Whilst quite properly the book does recognise the importance of O.C. Power, and it brings in the impact of both wartime petrol rationing and the call-up for military service even of directors, and records the company being fined for swapping registration plates from one vehicle to another 'for insurance purposes', there remain further aspects on which it would have been interesting to learn more. Matters that were peculiar to this particular period: for example, the practicalities of the company's buses terminating at Bedworth with passengers changing there to the Coventry trams. Five or six years later, the buses would have contrived to run into Coventry itself, whether licensed in that city or not.

Overall, this is a worthy and worthwhile publication.

Roger Atkinson

Letters to the Editor

In your Editorial (NL 57) you quite rightly point to the need to record contemporary history, the reminiscences of those still with us, with *Newsletter* being a suitable place for publication of such. However, it is equally important to remember that the Association provides one of the very few outlets for the dissemination of material relating to the wider spectrum of history in a field that has never seen any wealth of past literature.

Only by understanding the whys and wherefores of the past can the present be understood and often that in turn can lead to progressing even further back to grasp the true origins.

My researches have taken me back from my own experiences in transport to the pre-WW2 background and thence via studying some personalities involved to the early 20th C and earlier. Indirectly, the subject of road construction techniques was introduced and in order to fully understand the administration of same it was necessary to delve even further back. I remain uncertain where the ultimate journey will take me!

One of the great advantages that the IT age has given us is the ability to re-evaluate and correlate recorded history as never before. It is hoped that the Association continues to foster research right across the very broad remit of its title and encourage publication of same.

Dave Bubier

I was interested to read Tony Newman's article about the Dartford Tunnel Cycle Service (NL 58) as this is the first time I have seen the full story of the vehicles concerned in print. Perhaps I can add a couple of facts about these unique but unsuccessful buses?

The five vehicles were registered 526-530 FJJ and had fleet numbers TT 1-5 in London Transport style, the TT obviously standing for Thames Trader. Tony mentions that all five were sold to a dealer in March 1966. I can confirm that one example, TT4, is still in existence and although I know where it is, I know the owner would not wish me to disclose the location.

Maurice Doggett