

ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

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NOTICE TO MEMBERS DATA PROTECTION ACT

The Roads and Road Transport History Conference proposes to hold its membership records on computer. If you object to your own name, address (and telephone number and interests, if you have given these) being held on computer, please advise the Hon. Treasurer, Roger Atkinson, 45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU (tel: 01244 351066)

This edition of the Newsletter will be distributed at the Meeting of the Conference to be held at Coventry, on Saturday, 21st September 1996, and subsequently by post to members not attending. Envelopes for dispatch have been supplied free of charge by DTS Publishing, whose booklist is inserted in each magazine.

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Future Publications

The next edition of the Newsletter is due for publication in December, and will be mailed to all members before the Christmas "rush".

Also available in the Autumn will be a summary of the points raised at the June Colloquium (briefly covered overleaf), which will be sent automatically and free of charge to those who attended the event at Chorley. Other members who would like to have these papers may send £1.00 for the papers to be included with the next Newsletter, or £1.30 for the immediate dispatch of same

It had been hoped to publish Occasional Paper No.1 along with this edition of the Newsletter. However, several matters concerning the size and content of this publication have yet to be settled. The format is A4, similar to this Newsletter, and price to members is £2.00. The subject is "Aspects of Transport during the Second World War", and the main contributions deal with the work of W.T. Underwood as Officer in Charge of Motor Transport, Portsmouth Dockyard, and an analysis of vehicles registered in Birkenhead during the period 1939-1945, the town chosen being a fairly typical UK borough of medium size (albeit a port). Orders for this 24-28 page item should be addressed to the Hon. Newsletter Editor.

1996 Colloquium

**Report of the 1996 Colloquium held at the British
Commercial Vehicle Trust Archives, Chorley,
Saturday 1st June 1996.**

**Theme: What do we need to know about road
freight transport?**

The meeting commenced at 11.0am, and formal proceedings began at 11.30 with a presentation by John Dunabin on the subject of the Chorley Joint Motor Omnibus Committee, which is summarised on page 4 of this Newsletter. This was followed by a tour of the premises conducted by the resident archivist, Roslyn Thistlewood, who briefly outlined the history, contents, and current work of the archive. Items available cover AEC, Albion, Austin-Morris (BMC), Atkinson, BUT, Crossley, Daimler, Guy, Leyland, Scammell, Sunbeam, and Thornycroft.

The lunchbreak over, the meeting was reconvened for the Colloquium itself, introduced by the Chairman. In his opening remarks he described the purpose of the meeting to explore the possible theme of the next Symposium (namely freight transport by road), and to discuss what form of publications might fill the void on library shelves which faces students seeking information on the transport of goods. All those attending the Colloquium have received detailed notes on the proceedings, and it is not intended to reprint those here, but the main points raised were as follows:

i) Was a definitive work on road freight transport a feasible possibility, or was it more realistic to expect a series of works on specific subjects (history of companies, transport of specific types of goods, etc.)

ii) The need for a good bibliography / list of sources / guides to technical magazines of the past. John Hibbs made it clear that he is prepared to accept the names of texts which are thought suitable for inclusion in a bibliography, and that such could be then published by the Conference.

iii) The limitations of libraries vis-a-vis transport history. Students of transport face indifference, and in some cases ignorance of what is available, difficult to understand cataloguing and difficulties of access when the material has been micro-filmed.

iv) There is a need as much for a grand history of the subject as for a good popular history of freight transport by road, and such would be easier to produce in the short term, perhaps with several writers working under an editor. There was also a suggestion that a book in the format of *The Oxford Companion to Railway History* might be both useful and feasible.

v) Personalities in the industry, often an essential part of the story, present the historian with two problems: to what extent can we tell the truth, and to what extent can we rely upon them to have told the truth.

The proceedings were ably summed up by Professor John Armstrong, who felt that there was a consensus in favour of the need for works on individual subjects as the initial step that would lead to the eventual major history. He touched upon one theme that had not been mentioned around the table, namely the cross-fertilisation between different modes of transport, road - rail, road - air, etc., and pointed out that competition did not rule out collaboration. He introduced us to the concept of 'counterfactual history', the study of the 'might-have-been' in order to illuminate facts.

Professor Armstrong felt that the Committee could usefully discuss ideas for the 1997 Symposium, and work on a bibliography or source book, and might even attempt to set up a collaborative work of some kind, now that the ideas discussed at the Colloquium had emerged and coalesced. The meeting closed at 4.30pm, after a vote of thanks to Roslyn Thistlewood for her help in providing the venue and serving the refreshments.

The Journal of Transport History

JOHN HIBBS writes - members who do not subscribe to the JTH, edited by our Academic adviser Professor John Armstrong, would be well advised to get hold of the March 1996 number, for the sake of two articles.

The first, by C.S. Hallas, is "On the hoof - road transport in the Yorkshire Dales 1750-1900". It systematically analyses the movement of goods and livestock in and from Wensleydale and Swaledale, including the local carrier services, and stressing the importance of the highways, side roads and drove roads.

In "Not Rosie the Riveter", sub-titled "Women's diverse roles in the making of the long-distance bus industry", Dr. Margaret Walsh amplifies the contribution she made in her article "The early growth of long distance bus transport in the United States", which Professor Barker included in his book "The Economic and social effects of the Spread of Motor Vehicles" (Macmillan, 1987). There is much to be learnt from a better understanding of events in the USA and Canada, and until we have an extensive treatment of those events (maybe from the pen of Dr Walsh?) this article will take the reader into the subject, and excite an appetite for more. This article brings to light women's contribution to the industry.

BOOK REVIEW

Books are chosen for their historical content, and because they place hitherto unpublished material before the reader.

THE PWLLHELI AND LLANBEDROG TRAMWAYS by John F. Andrews, published by D.Brown & Sons Ltd. Cowbridge 1995 (£14.95) (Hardback, 72pp, landscape)

I have known John Andrews for 35 years, and I am delighted with this book. In 1961 I went to Pwllheli in search of what already seemed quite hopeless - relics of the tramways. I did not really expect to find much, but I did hope to find ancient inhabitants with memories. And I did! But they told me to get in touch with John Andrews in Cardiff, the grandson of Solomon Andrews.

He had already written one book, over 20 years ago, *Keep Moving*, the story of Solomon Andrews and his family, and that had a chapter on Pwllheli. But the new book, on the Pwllheli venture alone, with some detail as well of the Pwllheli Corporation tramway, represents a lifetime of digging into family records and it shows the benefit of making known to everyone in Pwllheli that "if you find anything to do with the old trams, let John Andrews know".

It is not just the remarkable numbers of photographs from 1894 to 1928, it is also the correspondence and the handbills, which evoke this horse tramway through the sandhills, and also the town and period in which it operated. A time when people went to Pwllheli for their annual holidays, and an hour's ride (each way) on the horse tram to Glan-y-Weddw was the highlight of their stay. The line survived to be the last horse-drawn tramway on mainland Britain, and it ceased working in April 1928 after a storm washed away some of the track in the autumn of the previous year. By the following autumn there were already calls for it to be reinstated, as it had become so much a part of the local scene. It operated some unique cars. Like the Crosville Motor Services, it operated its own Pleasure Gardens (at Glan-y-Weddw) to generate traffic. And more unusually, it seems to have flown in the face of convention in operating cars without any numbers! This book is highly recommended.

RA

*Both *The Pwllheli and Llanbedrog Tramways* and *Keep Moving*, which has chapters on the Solomon Andrews tramways and buses in Cardiff, London and elsewhere are available at £14.95 each, post free, from John F. Andrews, Normandie, 18 Lake Road East, Cardiff CF2 5NN.

ROAD HAULAGE HISTORY SOURCES

An Information Leaflet (No.11) produced by the Modern Records Centre, at The University of Warwick 1996. (£1)(A5, 8pp)

This useful leaflet lists the documents available under 25 main headings. They are mainly items from trade union or transport operator sources, but include the important collection of Applications & Decisions covering the years 1934-9, 1946-1989, and papers of R. Cropper, C.S. Dunbar (see also page 11) and G.W. Quick Smith. An essential reference document for those interested in road haulage.

ARP

Available from University of Warwick Library, Modern Records Centre, Coventry CV4 7AL. (£1) ... cheques to University of Warwick Foundation)

A THOUSAND MILES FROM NOWHERE by G. Coster, published by Penguin Books, 1996, (£5.99) (275pp)

This readable narrative of contemporary trucking is presented in two very contrasting sections, East (UK to Russia), and West (across the States). It is by turns depressing (on the lot of the UK trucker compared to his US counterpart, on the rigours of life behind the former Iron curtain, on the potentially dangerous size and power of the modern rig on crowded roads); exhilarating (when describing the American scene); annoying (when it devotes part of a chapter to the inanities of 'truck racing'); and at times illuminating (for example on the interlocking relationship of European agriculture, food-processing and distribution and long-distance road haulage). In Europe, the author rode in a Seddon-atkinson (although he had failed to read up on the history of the marque: p.58); in the States he rode a Kenworth, which its drivers were convinced was "pure truck", so obvious that they could not articulate their preference for the marque. The image of the long-distance driver as someone *driven* comes over strongly in the European travels of the author:

"Then you drove away from all those problems" (of normal, everyday life: p.68)

"There was only ever onward"

Truly a fascinating book: one reaches the end of the road/read with regret.

RS

LONDON BUSES 1985-95 - MANAGING THE CHANGE by Tom McLachlan, Venture Publications 1996 (£17.95) hardback, 127pp

Tom McLachlan has done historians a service by setting out the course of events in London with so much detail and such a satisfactory style. The pre-history of London buses is well handled, although the reviewer would have liked to have seen more on the influence of Sir Henry Maybury, whose "rails good, roads bad" policy lasted so long. The period of the title is covered well, and will remain a useful source for future authors.

JH

The Chorley Joint Motor Omnibus Committee

An address given by John Dunabin to the 1996 Colloquium of the R&RTHC on 1st June 1996 at the British Commercial Vehicle Trust Archives, Chorley.

Contrary to the belief in some high quarters, road traffic has always needed control: even the Romans discovered the fact. In this country, prior to the passage of the Road Traffic Act of 1930, which replaced in whole or in part 19 earlier Acts (plus others applicable only to London or Scotland), one of the most important was the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847, still applicable in 1996 to taxicab licensing but importantly modified so far as bus services were concerned by the Roads Act of 1920.

Under the 1847 Act, many local authorities (c.1,300 by 1930) including county and municipal boroughs and some urban and rural districts, obtained powers to license stage carriages. Some, contrary to the intentions of the Act, used the powers to shield debt-ridden tramways from motor bus competition. This was helped by the modifications mentioned above, which replaced the right of appeal to the High Court by a reference to the Minister of Transport. Other authorities, at war with local tramway companies, some of which had strong statutory powers, licensed all comers to break the tramway monopoly. Finally, there were those which used their powers as mere money raisers. Such fragmented control created conflict between neighbouring authorities, and rendered the operation of desirable cross-boundary services difficult.

Lancashire south of the Ribble was already, by the turn of the century, fairly densely if patchily populated, with a mixture of urban (including boroughs) and rural authorities. Chorley Rural District, with Chorley Borough in its centre, was less than 100 square miles in area, but its boundaries were contiguous with no less than 9 urban and 4 rural districts. Furthermore, it was ringed by the 4 powerful county boroughs of Blackburn, Bolton, Preston and Wigan. As elsewhere after 1918, the demand for cheap transport mounted rapidly, and motor bus operators, not all of them totally reputable, appeared in great numbers. In 1924, Coppull Parish Council, alarmed by the dangers of motorbuses racing each other through the village, approached Mr. R.E. Aspden, Clerk to the Chorley RDC, asking if something could be done to curb the practice.

The appeal obviously fell on sympathetic ears,

and Mr. Aspden contacted other authorities seeking joint action. Croston UDC deferred a decision, claiming that no regular service entered the village, while Withnell, with only 300 yards of bus route, declined to join. Apart from this, support was good, and after several meetings, a Conference was held on February 23rd, 1925, attended by representatives of Chorley Borough, Chorley RDC, Adlington, Horwich and Leyland UDCs, and the Chorley Joint Motor Omnibus Committee came into existence. Other authorities joined later.

It is interesting to note that one of the Leyland representatives was Mr. A. Dallas, the leading independent bus operator in the area, but he withdrew when his own applications were considered.

Powers to set up the committee stemmed from the Local Government Act of 1894, and it was therefore a statutory body, with wide (if not well defined) powers. Although their full extent was questioned, as we shall see later, the existence and relevance of the committee were widely recognised. It did not, possibly could not, become a licensing body in its own right, but all applications came for consideration to the Committee, which then made recommendations, incorporating its standard conditions, to the licensing authorities.

From its earliest days, the Committee sought ways of increasing its effectiveness, the Town Police Clauses Act of 1889 stopped short at Section 67 of the 1847 Act, thereby omitting the power to fix fares. A possible solution, offered by the UDC Association was to get operators to agree a timetable (Powers to do this were generally accepted) with fares before they received a licence. At a more practical level the Committee appointed a full-time Inspector. It got to work very speedily, and even before its official birth in November 1924 the Committee was considering how to limit the number of operators on the main road between Leyland and Preston from eight to four. No answer was found - market forces did it in the end - and a year later the Timetable Sub-Committee reported failure to formulate timetables for this route, recommending the issue of licences without. The main Committee did not give up, and in March 1928 it approved co-ordinated timings of the remaining independents, leaving out Ribble motor Services, now down to five.

Even this did not eliminate problems, with a maximum of twelve buses an hour and no sharing of receipts, timekeeping was crucial, and in July 1929 Fishwicks, the major operator with a 50% share, offered to pay half the costs of a full-time inspector for this route alone.

Returning to earlier years, the Committee seemed to have taken a tougher line on timekeeping elsewhere, and its indefatigable Inspector, Mr. Bolton, sent in

many adverse reports. His wage of nearly £4 per week was a good one for the time, but he certainly gave value for money. Remaining on duty until at least 10.27 pm on Christmas Eve 1926, he recorded six instances of Dallas buses leaving Chorley late - average delay 8 minutes - but on Boxing Day he was out again, this time noting a Ribble bus running five minutes late on a Dallas time!

It would seem Dallas staff thought they were being victimised. On 27th July 1927 Mr. Bolton boarded a Dallas bus and the conductor demanded a fare, which was duly paid. This was regarded as obstructing the Inspector in the performance of his duties and the sixpence was reclaimed. The Dallas response was robust. The company had no objection to the Inspector boarding, but would not let him make a convenience of their vehicles....did they imply that he was taking a free ride home? A threat of future discrimination by the JOC against Dallas does not seem to have materialised.

There were other battles of a more formal nature on other fronts. Early in 1925, Ribble commenced a new service between Chorley and Adlington, without prior approval by the Committee. The two places were already linked via the A6 road, but the new service took a roundabout route through Limbrick and Heath Charnock. Chorley RDC thought this was unsuitable for full-sized (32 seater) vehicles, and the JOC suggested the use of a 20 seater, whereupon 'Major' Hickmott of Ribble said he had no 20 seaters, and preferred to withdraw the service. A succession of other operators followed. The third of these, Frank Green (t/a Freeman's Silver Star), despite having purchased a 20 seater bus specially to run the service, became badly trapped in an inter-council tussle, which pointed to a major weakness in the JOC's position. Chorley RDC, with the JOC's support, only licensed the service from Chorley to a point short of Adlington to discourage through traffic. Mr. Green complied with the restriction, to the great annoyance of Adlington UDC, who then withheld Mr. Green's licence to pick up in Adlington on his main road service, action which brought accusations of disloyalty to the Committee. Details of subsequent moves are lacking, but it seems clear that the JOC extricated itself from an untenable position. Mr. Green continued to serve Adlington via the main road, and from timetable evidence, by 1929 if not earlier his service via Limbrick did so too.

Now let us look at what was to be the Committee's major battle, almost its Waterloo, although inevitably it played the role of the Duke of Plaza Toro, who, it will be recalled, led his regiment from behind. At the end of 1925, Horwich was linked to Bolton via Chorley New Road by a long established tram service of Bolton Corporation, a route which was also

covered on a very restricted basis by Ribble - the latter also ran a through Chorley - Bolton service by a roundabout route through Westhoughton. It is not quite clear who made the first move, as claims of contestants are not always to be trusted, but Freemans, who had already reached Horwich from Chorley, sought to extend to Bolton via Montserrat (Chorley Old Road). Ribble was at this time seeking renewal of its Chorley New Road licence, but quickly switched to the Montserrat route, followed by Bolton Corporation, whose tramway also reached the same location.

Faced with three operators, each it seems planning to run hourly, Worwich UDC following JOC guidelines, proposed an even headway 20 minute service. This irked Ribble, who deleted the JOC's standard conditions from its application. Bolton also earned official displeasure by running more than once per hour, and were told this could not be ac-

CHORLEY JOINT MOTOR OMNIBUS COMMITTEE Standard conditions

1. Times of Operation

Services to operate in adherence to timetables as approved

2. Vehicle Fitness

Vehicles to have a Certificate of Fitness, renewed every 12 months.

3. Vehicle Insurance

Production of Third Party Insurance Certificate required.

4. Emergency Exits

New vehicles to have a suitable emergency exit at the rear.

5. Petrol Filling

Petrol tanks only to be filled when the bus is empty

6. Fares Publicity

Fare tables to be displayed on the bus

7. Ages of Drivers & Conductors

No driver to be under 20. No conductor to be under 18.

8. Additional Services

No further services to be licensed unless existing services shown to be inadequate.

A further requirement was that tickets be issued. Renewals of licenses were to be made in the light of adherence to bye-laws and licence conditions. Racing and excessive speed, and running without due regard to the safety of the public or passengers was strongly discouraged.

These regulations had been adopted by 17/4/25

cepted, but that duplicate buses could be run at their allotted times. Horwich refused to grant any licences to Ribble and the company appealed to the Minister of Transport. An official enquiry followed on 1st December 1926, but before its completion the parties came to an agreement. Bolton Corporation, Freemans, and Ribble were granted equal rights on Chorley Old Road in the Horwich area, while Ribble acknowledged the right of Horwich UDC to impose lawful conditions. However, Ribble continued to ignore conditions as laid down, the point at issue being whether the local authority could dictate timetables or merely approve those submitted.

By the end of 1926, Bolton Council in its regulatory capacity had joined the JOC, and in July 1927 the conflict was repeated, with Bolton now rejecting Ribble applications. Another enquiry followed and the Minister's ruling, represented as a compromise, was really a defeat for the combined local authorities. The Council was told to issue licences to Ribble subject to the company submitting its timetable, running in accordance with it, and not varying it without seven days notice. Bolton Watch Committee's immediate reaction to the minister's ruling was to accept it for Ribble, but only to grant licences to other operators subject to the old conditions. **MIGHT**, it seems, was **RIGHT**.

These events could have meant the death of the JOC - Horwich did drop out - and of all regulatory attempts by local authorities, but they did not. In fact, similar committees came into being at nearby Preston and elsewhere. What is more, the activities of the energetic JOC Inspector Mr. Bolton continued, and as late as December 1930 he spotted a Mr. Thompson of Chorley plying for hire in the town with a bread van: the driver pulled up, shouted "Anybody for Blackburn?", and six people boarded.

Three months later though, when Mr. Oliver Hart applied for a service between Chorley and Southport, he was told that as he had not been operating by the 9th February, he would have to apply to the Traffic Commissioners. So the work of the JOC had come to an end. Summing up, faced with a confused mass of outdated legislation, an urgent need for action, and a foot-dragging Government, the Chorley Joint Motor Omnibus Committee had some notable failures but many more successes. The standards it set formed a model for the 1930 Act. What is more, it remained self-supporting for its six year existence, the licence fees it received being more than enough to cover its expenses.

(The map opposite shows principal places that are mentioned in the text: it was drawn originally to illustrate routes of Freeman's "Silver Star" Service, and Ribble Motor Services.)

The Town Police Clauses Act, 1847

John Dunabin's article makes mention of this important piece of regulation. The notes below by Paul Byers describe its importance.

This Act was presented to the House of Commons for its first reading on 26th April 1847. It completed the commons stages by 18th June, and was passed on to the Lords. It received the Royal Assent on 22nd July 1847.

It is described in its preamble as "an Act for consolidating in one Act certain provisions usually contained in Acts for regulating the Police in towns". In its original form, it only related to England and Ireland, and contained 79 Sections covering such diverse topics as: the powers, duties, and privileges of constables, obstructions and nuisances in the streets, fire-fighting, places of public resort, hackney carriages, bathing facilities, and claims for damages and other penalties.

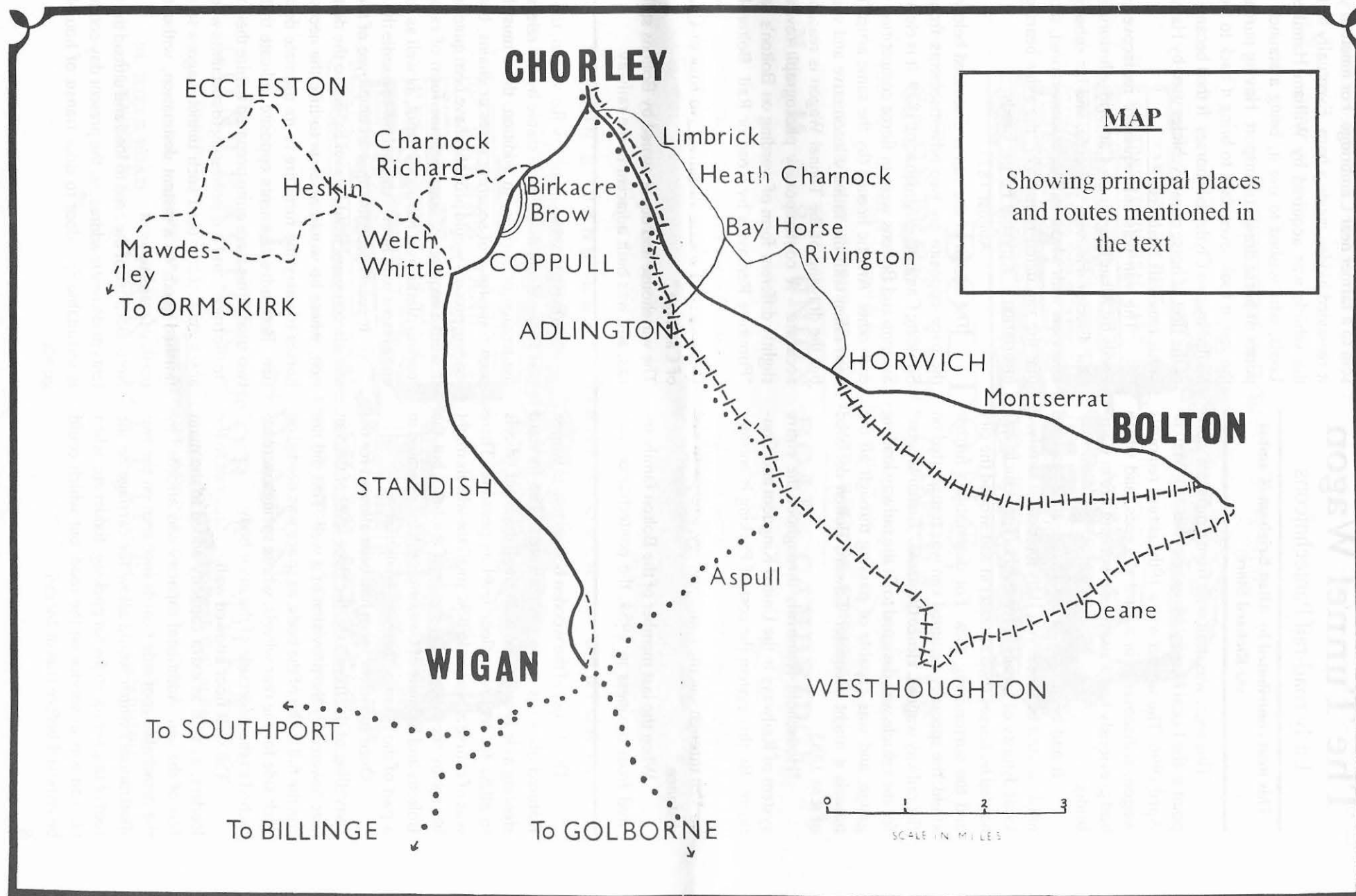
Over the next 139 years, there have been in excess of 40 amendments and partial repeals, leaving the current statute with 41 sections, mainly covering hackney carriage matters, with some mention of obstructions and nuisances due to street processions.

The Act is the major enabling Act which confers powers to local authorities, and was the forerunner of the many acts related to stage carriage operations. As an example, over the years Cardiff has registered over 25 bye-law supplements using powers granted by this Act.

The Victorian authors of this legislation looked upon the hackney carriage business as a form of street trading. It was not until the passing of the 1976 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act that local authorities were given further powers regarding hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. Other minor powers regarding the allocation of road space for taxi ranks were conferred upon local authorities by the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act.

The End is Nigh.....

...for many of the very old (in excess of thirty years) public service buses on the islands of Malta and Gozo. The Government of Malta has been trying for many years to upgrade the bus fleet, which has almost become a working museum, but it seems now that by 2000 the older buses will be a thing of the past. For those who wish to recall past times, now is the time to visit these islands, before the upgrading process begins in earnest.



The Tunnel Wagon

Early road-rail Pantechnicons

This item contributed by Allan Brigham (Cambs)
via Richard Storey

This topic was dealt with from a different viewpoint in the Local History Magazine (No.54), March-April 1996. The subject was a 19th century removals wagon, rediscovered in a yard at Leeds, and which had previously had a sixty year working life in Cambridge.

It had begun life in the 1870s, and was used until the start of World War II by the Bolton family, a local dynasty of furniture removers. The vehicle was hauled by horses (two abreast) in and around the city and the surrounding area. For destinations further afield, the specially designed van was transported on flat railway wagons. Hence the name "Tunnel Wagon" for the vehicle was designed to fit the railway loading gauge, and was capable of passing through all the tunnels it might encounter. Edward Bolton declared of it in 1885

"Household Removals throughout the entire system of Railways in the United Kingdom and Continent. By this system the cost of Packing is entirely avoided, and the Furniture remains in the same lock-up Van through-out the entire journey, irrespective of distance."

When the last member of the Bolton family retired from business in 1954, the pantechnicon was

sold to a farmer near Cambridge. For nineteen years it remained hidden inside a barn. Eventually in 1973 the vehicle was acquired by William Hamilton of Leeds, who wished to use it, being a staunch supporter of horse drawn transport. Having purchased the van, it took seven days to bring it back to Leeds, hauled by two Clydesdale horses. It then became part of the fleet of horse drawn vehicles used by Hamilton in his removals business.

The van was subsequently rediscovered in Leeds by Allan Brigham, a Cambridge historian and tour director. His visit to Leeds, and his subsequent interview with Mr. Hamilton, by now retired, showed that the van dated from 1877, the axles bearing the inscription "Kirkstall Forge, Leeds.

August 1877 "

The design of the van is discussed below. On the page opposite are two advertisements from the Spalding Cambridge Almanac of 1879. It is clear that Swanns and Boltons were in fierce competition with each other. Artistic licence (by the same artist?) has been taken with the railway locomotive and wagon, but the drawing of the Tunnel Wagon is reasonably accurate. A contemporary photograph reveals a slightly different form of wording on Bolton's van: "Furniture Removals by Road or Rail. Bolton Bros Furniture Vans, 18 Union Road, Cambridge. To any Distance. No Packing Required. No Risk or Change of Carriage."

The warehouse and depot owned by Boltons still exists, and was built adjacent to the railway.

The design of the wooden bodied tunnel wagon featured above is quite sophisticated. The forward steering axle is equipped with small diameter wheels to allow for as low a floor level as possible. There was of course a limit as to how small the wheels might be, set by the state of the roads of the time, but the Boltons and Swanns of Cambridge at least operated in a part of the country that was fairly flat.

Once sufficient room had been allowed for the swivelling of the front axle, the floor level of the van was lowered by the provision of a well. This did not run the full width of the body, as space was needed on each side for the rear wheels, whose springs were attached to the underside of the main body.

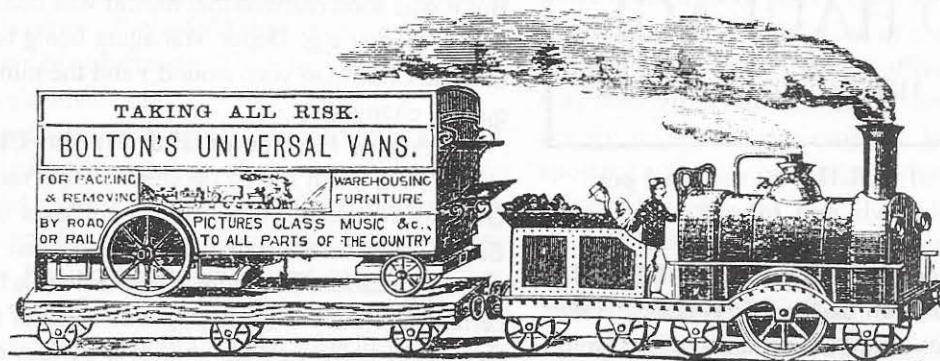
The well floor allowed walk-in facilities to the loaders, as well as extra capacity added to the main box of the van. Additional capacity was afforded by the detachable roof side boards (not seen on the two illustrations) which would allow for carriage on the roof of tarpaulins, straw for packing, fodder etc. when the van was in service on the road, but which could be removed before transit by rail.

When placed on a railway flat wagon, the van was lowered and made more stable by the release of the tension of springs. In addition, there must have been some form of securing wires or chains, but the loading process would probably have been quite swift. It would require, of course, some form of ramp or loading platform at the goods depot, as well as someone present with knowledge of how to handle the van.

It seems probable that an employee of the removals company would travel by rail to the destination, where he would arrange to hire the necessary horses to carry the furniture to its ultimate destination. Both advertisements opposite indicate that the two rival firms were quite prepared to hire their vans "to the trade", and it is interesting to speculate whether any manufacturer used such tunnel wagons to send finished goods to a distant destination, without the perils of transshipment.

Note: Because of the need to load and unload the contents at domestic addresses, the present day container is unsuitable for door to door transit of household goods.

ESTIMATES FREE.



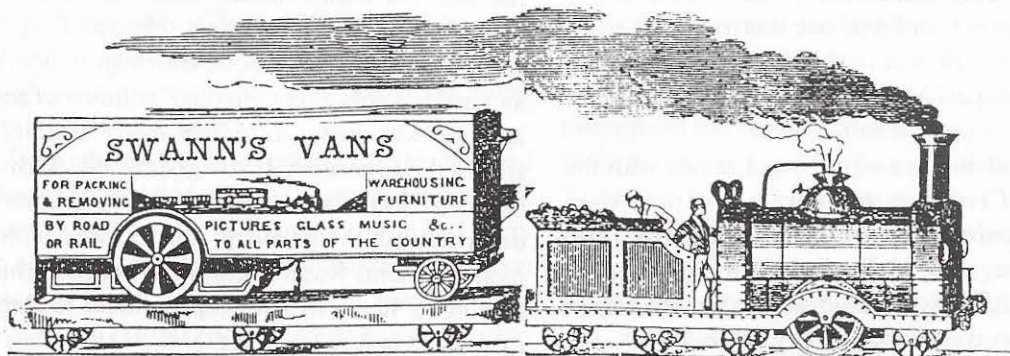
BOLTONS, CARRIERS AND CONTRACTORS

For the removal of all kinds of Furniture, Machinery, Corn, Coal and Property of every description by Road, Rail or Sea to any part of the World.

VANS LENT TO THE TRADE BY DAY, HOUR, OR OTHERWISE.

Nos. 11 & 26, UNION ROAD, CAMBRIDGE.

SWANN'S VANS ESTABLISHED OVER A CENTURY.



WITHOUT PACKING OR RISK, TO ANY DISTANCE.

ESTIMATES FREE.

J. J. SWANN, CONTRACTOR FOR REMOVALS,

To or from all parts of the United Kingdom & Continent, by Road, Rail, or Sea.

VANS LET TO THE TRADE BY DAY OR HOUR.

31, HILLS ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE.

VAN OFFICE.

31, HILLS ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE.

Some Personal Impressions of ROAD HAULAGE Characters

From the pen of G.R.Hayes, supplied per
Michael Bonavia and John Hibbs

Major General George Neville Russell, CB, CBE, RE(retired). Chairman of British Road Services 1948-59, - "Charles" to his familiars - was, I think, generally regarded as a highly successful Chairman of, first, the Road Transport Executive, and then the Road Haulage Executive. Conspicuously hard working, energetic in seeing for himself, voluble, sometimes irascible (never one to suffer fools gladly), he soon became well known and popular throughout the organisation.

It has been asked - did General Russell stay too long? Having built up the RHE to the point where it was a large successful and profitable business able to hold its own (albeit in many ways protected from the cold winds of competition) with the crippled private sector, should he not have moved on, or called it a day, at the time of the Disposals under the 1953 Act? Twenty thousand vehicles were sold off in three years, and sixteen thousand retained. Loyal, as always, to his political masters, it was in many ways an unhappy period - indeed, one that required a political subtlety which, it could hardly be expected, was not this particular ex-Army Officer's outstanding quality.

In the event, most of the negotiations with the Minister and Civil Servants during this time were steered and often conducted by **G.Quick Smith - QS**, the word spinner, QS, the haulage industry's Vicar of Bray par excellence who could always be relied upon to suggest a good way around any difficulty.

But it must be said, in General Russell's defence, that he came into his own again, after Disposals, when consolidation and restoration of morale among the remaining staff were the Orders of the Day. The 1956 Act halted de-nationalisation and crystalised the position as at that time. Here, General Russell was invaluable, and as could be expected, an inspiration to the men under his command. Much of the old fire still burned, but once a new separate company structure was under way, it was time for General Russell to move on. He went to the Eastern Area Board in 1957, and became its Chairman for 1961-1962. After this he served on BRB 1962-4. He was Presi-

dent of the IOT 1958-1959.

Quite early on, J.B.Hastie, Scottish divisional Manager, offered the Chairman **BRS 1** as a registration for his car, and this was gratefully accepted. But it was soon realised that the car was conspicuous on the roads, (e.g. Depot Managers being tipped off that the Chairman was around,) and the number was quietly changed.

Archie Henderson and Harold Clay came to the RTE from the same stable, the Transport & General Workers' Union, both upholders of Ernest Bevin. They were said to have been keen rivals in that organisation. Certainly in their new role they were certainly to be found on opposite sides of the argument, and there was sometimes a certain coolness; but, at the end of the day, they seemed to pull well together. It was said that in their early days in transport "they had been at opposite ends of the same tram-car."

Archie Henderson was, basically, a party-political animal who fought his way through the hurly-burly of Labour and Trade Union politics. During the War, he had worked with a Licensing Authority, which must have widened his horizons considerably. I remember him in RHE days as a very fair man, and became very fond of him as a "Chief". I soon felt quite sure that, despite our differing political outlooks, there was a genuine rapport between us.

In the deliberations of the Executive Archie was, I believe, generally constructive and amenable: but he could be difficult, even argumentative, if he felt that the matter under discussion affronted his strongly held political beliefs. He was frequently at cross purposes with Claude Barrington, who always inclined towards a "commercial" solution of any problem and who was - a prudent man - usually on the side of the Chairman. If strongly moved, Archie could become doctrinaire to the point of stubbornness. In order to push things along, and to avoid undue acrimony, General Russell learnt to contrive things so that items likely to stir deep political feelings were raised just before lunch rather than after, thus hoping to avoid extended and inconclusive sittings throughout the afternoon.

Archie Henderson sometimes displayed a subtlety of mind that was unexpected by those who did not really know him. I recall a certain road haulier in about 1952 who was pleading for haulage permits (to operate beyond the 25 mile limit prescribed under the 1947 Act) to enable his business to survive. The man's plea to his MP had been passed down by Lord Hurcomb, with a hint of concessions to be made. He was given an interview at Marylebone by Archie Henderson and Jim Garrett, Chief Officer, Organisation, at that time, with myself, Permits Officer, in

attendance. The two of them decided beforehand that Jim would strongly resist any concession whatsoever but that, towards the end of the interview, Archie would over-rule him and suggest - insist - on some small relaxation. Jim would then give way but with every sign of reluctance. The ploy worked, to the Executive's advantage.

James Berry Garrett ("Jim" to all), the bluff, bucolic village squire type of character who always looked and spoke as though he would be more at home on his North Devon farm, was in fact a shrewd business man. He and Archie always got on well together, and Jim was always well liked by his staff. Archie Henderson never sought to make speeches - at least, not from platforms. It was not his role, but he was effective and decisive as the Chairman of a committee.

Harold Clay was a small "Father-figure" of a man, a role I am sure he enjoyed. Indeed, he would have made a good parish priest in a rural community. Generally gentle, but as befitted his Trade Union background, quick to put on the gloves if need be, and never fearing to stand out against his old colleague, Archie Henderson, he was basically a compromiser, something of a trimmer, which Archie never was. He was always ready with the oil-can which made him a good chap to be at Stanley Raymond's side at meetings with Union Officers. He loved clichés, and had a large repertoire, which those who worked with him could always anticipate - "Horse of a different colour", "Bit between the teeth". Cricketing metaphors came out most readily - "Straight bats", "Hit for six", "That's not cricket", and so on. The one which revealed much of his character was "Bend the rules, yes. But never break them."

Through most of his working life, Harold had been closely connected with the Workers Educational Association, and he was very proud - as he had every right to be - of the Honorary Doctorate conferred upon him towards the end of his career in road haulage. Unlike Archie, Harold enjoyed speaking to an audience, and always gladly accepted invitations such as addressing the BRS Branch and Depot Managers at the series of weekly residential information courses arranged for them following the demoralizing Disposals period. Harold usually sat in for the final session - a lecture delivered by Allan Whitfield, successor the Stanley Raymond as Personnel Officer. Allan, a natural, dramatic orator, would conclude, after sixty minutes or more, by calling on "Doctor Harold Clay, Member for Industrial Relations, to deliver the Valedictory Address".....and Harold would be away, for the next fifteen minutes, riding his horses of different colours in all directions. This surfeit of oratory, like a Chinese meal, satisfying at the time,

but lacking in sustenance, was followed invariably by genuine applause - and a rush to the nearest bar.

Harold Clay and Claude Barrington, though poles apart in both background and politics, became great friends largely because of a strong common interest in sport. Away from the office, watching cricket was their great interest, which they enjoyed tremendously in each other's company. In the promotion of sporting events within the organisation, these two often acted as one.

Claude Barrington was somewhat overawed by General Russell. He was a financier, a city type, rather than a practical haulier, and had come from Transport Development, a financial group within the Drayton empire. He was a bachelor who lived with sisters, very comfortably, in Hampstead Garden suburb, a very abstemious man, with little taste for social drinking.

He came into his own when the Company structure was established following the 1956 Act. He took over as Chairman of BRS (Parcels) Limited, and was soon visiting every branch in the country. He instituted the "Barrington Trophy", the Parcels equivalent of the General Haulage "Walker Cup". He encouraged sporting activities within and between the branches, particularly cricket and football. Under his very active leadership, BRS (Parcels) Limited became a recognisable and highly profitable entity with a very strong *esprit de corps*. Claude Barrington had seen service in the First World War, and had a severe disability of the left arm in consequence. I believe that, between the wars, he had been known as Major Barrington.

Harry Dutfield had been Chairman of the RHA throughout the period of discussions and negotiations with the Main Line Railways and the Minister of Transport prior to nationalisation. I came to know and respect him when I was a member of the Road/Rail Liaison Committees of those days. Dutfield became a part-time member of the RTE under the 1947 Act, and although I could never see him as any other than the representative of the RHA interests, ensuring the best deal he could within the law for his earlier friends - many of whom were, after all, being dispossessed - I never heard any question concerning his integrity. Dutfield was regarded as a tough haulier in a hard world, but he was no "paper" man, sometimes turning up for a meeting with the wrong Agenda. He was obviously on good terms with Quick Smith, and I believe he got on well enough with General Russell.

George Sinclair looked after Engineering, Stores and Surveying. With a background at London Transport he confined himself generally to those

continued overleaf, column 2

Historic Book Review

A section devoted to the appraisal of out of print books which are considered to be still of value

ROAD HAULAGE, by C.S.Dunbar (Ian Allan ABC series, 4 inches by 6 inches, 64pp, 2/6d, first published 1960.

Here is an ABC with no numbers! This is not a spotters book, although it does contain some pictures of various types of lorry current at the time of writing. It consists of an essay by C.S.Dunbar, entitled "A Short History of Road Haulage", which is followed by lists of the addresses of the R.H.A. area offices, and details of the Licensing Authorities and the Traffic Areas. This brings the reader to page 20. The rest of the booklet is a glossary, but here is the best part!

The glossary explains the technicalities of the A.B. and C Licences, including the Special A, the Contract A, and the F licence. It covers technical terms used in the business of carrying goods for hire and reward, the conduct of the traffic courts with regard to road haulage, and terms used about the vehicles. It touches upon the inherent problems of the railway rating system (changed in 1953) which allowed road haulage an advantage over rail bound traffic. If you do know that a Luton van, the sort with a section of the rear body extending over the roof of the cab, is so called because the Luton based hat industry used such to maximise the quantity of straw hats that could be stacked in a vehicle, do you know what a Manchester load is? Do you know what sort of load would be found on a "pole wagon", a "Queen Mary" or a "Dolly"? Which parts of a vehicle are the cratch and the rave?

This pocket-sized work is of great value still, as both a picture of the times and a quick reference book. It probably did not sell as many copies as the ABCs with numbers, but has stood the test of time.

ARP

LIGHT RAILWAYS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, by Peter Bosley, published by Manchester University Press, 1990. (hardback, pp 210)

I came across this in a remaindered book catalogue, unpriced, and so probably a surplus review copy. I am only sorry I did not see it sooner, but we road historians cannot keep up with all the rail books.

Apart from a tendency to repetition it is a good and scholarly study of a field in which nostalgia books are more common. But my reason for this brief notice is to draw members' attention to the references to road transport that are scattered through its pages, generally well referenced. The rural omnibus in the late nineteenth century, an area that awaits research:

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the respective costs of road and rail freight carriage; and other matters of interest are to be found. Sadly, the index is quite inadequate, so it is necessary to read the book, but that is not an unduly heavy task.

John Hibbs

ROAD HAULAGE CHARACTERS....

....continued from previous page.

departments without trespassing in the preserves of other members. So far as I know, he was on very good terms with his colleagues, and was certainly loyal to the Chairman.

In the beginning, the RTE Secretariat was short on administrators, and it so happened that a number of experienced men had just returned to the United Kingdom after Government Service in the Sudan. Some of them were known to General Russell, and he was pleased to have them enrolled on the staff, notably J.L. Willoughby, Major P.D. Mulholland, and Messrs. Hum and Padmore. They were known privately, but very kindly, as the "British Road Dervishes"

G.R. Hayes 6/82

WARTIME TRANSPORT.....

....can You help?

The Editor wishes to compile a complete list of Second World War R.O.F. sites, many of which required special facilities to transport large numbers of (mainly female) workers from nearby towns or government hostels. Some had special railway stations and/or large bus stations.

The following is a suggested list: of major R.O.F.s

Aycliffe
Bishopton
Bridgend
Bridgewater
Chorley
Hereford
Kirkby
Marchiel
Pembrey
Ranskill (?)
Risley
Ruddington (?)
Swynnerton
Thorp Arch

Usually such sites were served by fleets of second hand buses operated by the established local bus operators, but there were also "internal" services, which often used vehicles owned by the Government (Ministry of Supply).

Fare Policy

Ron Phillips looks at tactics adopted in the recently concluded 'bus war' at Warrington, and wonders who won and who lost.

The Background

The 'war' was fought between Warrington Borough Transport (WBT) and the North Western Road Car Company (NW), a subsidiary of British Bus, which adopted a local fleetname, Goldlines. For a period approximating one third of the campaign, another contender was Lancashire Travel, the St. Helens based arm of MTL (Merseyside Transport)

The 'war' began after the well publicised loss of two municipal companies, those of Lancaster and Darlington, to Stagecoach, where companies that were unwilling to sell up after a first approach were closed down. Warrington had a network of urban services, with one or two longer interurban routes which had been started since deregulation, but which did not directly compete with others' operations. An earlier bus war between Warrington and North Western in 1990 had ended by mutual agreement: it should be pointed out that this skirmish involved North Western before it became part of British Bus. The long term outcome of the 1990 battle was that Warrington retained one route directly in competition with North Western, and established an extension of an existing route outside the old urban area which also operated into North Western 'territory'.

North Western had come to Warrington when it took over the Crosville operation. The depot had been closed down and the vehicles moved to a haulier's yard. Later NW opened a cramped depot on an old industrial site. The majority of the vehicles were old, and the nucleus was the former Crosville allocation; the only new vehicles were minibuses.

The Assault

North Western assembled a fleet of new buses (35 Dennis Darts with 10 Dennis Lances, although events caused the Lances to be otherwise deployed) and hired a yard at Haydock (about 8 miles from Warrington) from which to operate them. The vehicles carried a distinctive livery: plain dealer white upon which vinyls were attached with the fleetname Warrington 'Gold Lines'.

The plan was to operate parallel services over almost all WBT routes, showing the same route numbers plus 100, and timing departures just ahead of the WBT times. The sector to the west of the town, which might be called the Liverpool Road services, was to be operated by MTL in similar fashion.

What proved to be a weakness in the tactics of the aggressors was the fact that the assault was to be introduced in four stages, each a fortnight apart. This allowed WBT to counter various moves, and to shift the battle out of Warrington and into NW territory. The first two moves by Warrington were indeed impressive: they pre-empted the start of the war by attacking an urban service operated by NW, and then commenced a new service from Runcom to Liverpool, well outside their own area, but attacking the revenue of a profitable NW service.

The Existing Fares

Within the Warrington area, NW charged to the WBT fare scale where interurban services came into the town, and on the two existing urban minibus routes. Warrington generally revised fares in the pre-Christmas season, which it had done late in 1994 before the news of the impending attack broke. It is fair to say that Warrington was operating as required by the rules of the game: having just adjusted fares, the undertaking was set to be in the black for the coming year. Return fares were available on all urban routes from both operators. These offered about 25% saving on double the single fare.

Bargains Galore

At the end of January 1995, North Western commenced its first group of Gold Lines services to the north-east of the town. The leaflets declared the following 'bargains'.

SPECIAL FARES BARGAINS!

An Adult £1.00 (Child 50p) Dayrider ticket for all day travel on any Warrington Gold Lines service

Return fares can be purchased at any time of the day.

Senior Citizens and Disabled Pass holders travel FREE at any time.

Special introductory bargain single and return fares.

In addition, three days before the commencement of each phase, Gold Lines buses operated over the new routes free of charge. There was an immediate outcry for various reasons, but WBT in particular attacked the fares policy, saying that it was unfair. The "special introductory bargain single and return fares" were in fact only "bargain returns". All tickets issued were marked "Return", and could be used for a return journey over the same route. WBT maintained that Gold Lines must have been operating at a loss: if it were assumed that the white buses were carrying 50% of the traffic on each route (which they

were not) then they could not be taking 50% of the revenue, as all Senior Citizens were riding free, and all ordinary passengers could be riding at half rates if they used their return tickets, or for less if they used the multi-ride facility offered by the Dayrider offer. Senior Citizens were told to beware the blandishments of free rides, because if WBT became insolvent, then the predator company would raise fares. Of course, WBT did not really mind if Gold Lines were not making money, but they were concerned that their revenue base should not be undermined.

MTL commenced operations in mid-February and offered a Dayrider facility for £1.00 on its four routes, and free rides for pensioners. It did not offer return fares at single rates. The furore over the free rides for senior citizens forced the predators to make the offer good for six weeks only, and this will be discussed further below. The MTL operation lasted for just about six months, of which the last six weeks were the statutory period of notice of withdrawal. After just over four months, therefore, MTL reached the conclusion that the operation, at the same fares as those charged by Gold Lines, was unprofitable. The apologists pointed to the fact that MTL operating costs were high as they used double deck vehicles based at St. Helens, but there were other factors: MTL was also withdrawing from Manchester, and had been hit by a series of strikes by bus crews. Before leaving the topic of MTL, it is curious to note that the vehicles used came from Gillmoss Depot, and had operated in the Liverpool area before transfer to St. Helens. In the first days of operation in Warrington they still carried notices pertaining to a fare increase in Liverpool commencing November 1994. This showed a fare scale well in excess of that which applied in Warrington, with rates set at 45p, 55p, 70p, 90p, 100p, 110p and 120p.

Complications

The third phase, with a new set of routes from Gold Lines in the south-east of the town, began on February 27th. The municipally operated bus station was now deemed to be unable to take any more departures, and future Gold Lines services would have to start elsewhere. Not only the bus station, but certain traffic corridors were now becoming clogged by buses. Gold Lines only operated "daytime" Monday-Saturday schedules, but now found the issue of early morning and evening schedules one they could not avoid. Complications would arise on Monday March 6th, when WBT introduced new timetables, cutting out many unprofitable timings which had hitherto been worked commercially, but which now had to go to protect daytime revenue. Many of these timings were put out to tender by Cheshire County Council, and some were taken up by Gold Lines (the tendering, of

course, had been done in the previous six weeks). As a result, Gold Lines took up some evening journeys with a resulting change of working hours for some of its staff, and the North Western garage at Warrington began to work three low patronage socially desirable services in the daytime. Gold Lines also added route 110 to their network, having registered this service after WBT had announced it would be withdrawn, but then changed its mind. Gold Lines, therefore, had to offer its fare bargains on evening subsidised services and a low revenue daytime service it thought it would have had exclusively to itself. On the day that WBT trimmed its sails to protect its income, Gold Lines and North Western were taking on more "loss leaders."

Phase Four, on 13th March, saw Gold Lines becoming entangled in problems of its own doing. Newly introduced routes 102 and 104 ran along the Manchester Road corridor, where Gold Lines buses had already operated for six weeks. Free travel for pensioners was due to end on the earlier routes, and yet begin on the new ones! The 104, operated by white Gold Lines buses, was introduced in competition with WBT 4 and a North Western route A! (This latter was deregistered from two weeks later.) Routes 105, 106 and 135 ran partly in competition with North Western services 37/8, so whilst intended to abstract revenue from WBT routes 5/6/35, they were also to depress the revenue of the 37/8, particularly because the fare bargains now applied to this southern and south eastern sector of the network. A "boundary" had to be declared, to limit the extent of the £1.00 Dayrider ticket.

The last week of March saw an unexpected event in the bus war. Greater Manchester had agreed to transfer some routes to North Western, including Warrington - Leigh services 586/588, and Warrington-Wigan service 602. From 25th March the North Western subsidiary Bee Line took over, replacing full size buses with minibuses. So bad was the timekeeping, that by the end of the week the licence had been revoked, and the services were taken up again by GMB on a temporary basis. Warrington, meanwhile, had started services to Wigan (402 and 460) from the same date. The free rides for senior citizens were now abandoned, and a new publicity drive for the £1.00 Dayrider ticket was launched, with a 50p fare now available for pensioners. The leaflet made the offer good for Gold Lines, North Western, and the Leigh services within the Warrington area. Passengers on the local section of the Leigh routes were, of course, deprived of this facility for the time being. From 24th April, all senior citizens were allowed to ride on NW and Gold Lines vehicles at half fare on the same terms as on WBT (by agreement with Cheshire CC).

Warrington fare policy

Where WBT ran outside the town, the fares were set according to WBT rates, although some care was needed when over-running friendly or enemy sections of routes. For example, the Runcorn - Liverpool service charged at MTL rates in Liverpool, as MTL was at first a contender in Warrington. The WBT service from Warrington to Runcorn via Widnes found itself in competition with a "friendly" operator, Halton Borough Transport, and after a few weeks the fares on the WBT buses were adjusted upwards to avoid conflict inside Widnes. Elsewhere in Greater Manchester there had been a fare rise, so buses on the Wigan routes 402 and 460 began to display stickers worded:

NO FARES INCREASE ON OUR BUSES

...just the usual quality at a price you can afford!

The through return fare on the Liverpool to Runcorn express service was reduced to £2.00 from April 28th, causing North Western further concern. Mid-May saw the start of WBT routes to Runcorn, Chester, and St. Helens, and the launch of new WBT Day Rover tickets, £2.50 all day, anywhere on the network, half price for senior citizens.

Gold Lines changes

From 22nd May, the North Western subsidiary Bee Line took up operation of the 586/588 once more, using second-hand Leyland Nationals in Bee Line yellow, but marketed as "Leigh Line". From 12th June, the half price return facility was changed: the cheap return was now 10p more. The slogan "Why buy a single when a return costs only 10p more" appeared on windscreens, to be replaced two weeks later by publicity for the Day Rider. This carried a bold £1 to attract the eye.

£1

The last week in June brought changes to the Chester-Warrington service, with a new timetable and a maximum fare of £2.50 to counter the WBT competition. For the commencement of the long school holidays, the windscreen sticker was now changed to a bold 50p, adding that this applied to children and senior citizens in very small print.

50p

North Western (red liveried) vehicles from the Warrington depot took on the services abandoned by MTL on August 7th, this being a temporary arrangement until Gold Lines routes could be re-arranged from August 14th. At this stage, several routes had been given up by the white buses because of very poor traffic. So autumn approached, the season for fare increases.

Stalemate

North Western increased fares on some routes in areas beyond Warrington. WBT reintroduced the "No Fare Increase on our buses" poster on the entire fleet, and Gold Lines trimmed back some of its local operations. As the New Year approached, so did the anniversary of the start of hostilities, and it is likely that the accountants at North Western would be looking at the financial returns from the Warrington adventure. Despite the give-away offers, the traffic on the white buses was still not sufficient to undermine WBT. Given that so many of the Gold Lines passengers were benefitting from cheap rates, then the takings would be lower than the necessary level to cover costs and make some profit.

The finances of the Warrington undertaking must have been affected. The fares as set in late 1994 were set in accordance with the expected (normal) traffic level, and to finance the war it had been necessary to adjust staffing, and wage rates, and to sell off the majority of the 14 strong coach fleet to allow for the purchase of new and secondhand buses with which to operate the out of town routes.

The Endgame

The New Year came, and the anniversary. The pressure on WBT was slightly eased as Gold Lines, now changing its title to "Gold Line" trimmed its operation slightly, and it became known that in April the remote depot at Haydock would close, and the vehicles would come to Warrington. To make room, the existing vehicles used to operate the NW out-of-town routes, would be shifted to Runcorn, Wigan, and Knutsford (Starline) depots. New moves by WBT were the introduction of a minibus service in Northwich, a new route from Warrington to Liverpool, and a further reduction of the Runcorn-Liverpool day return fare, introduced as an "Easter Special" offer.

Outside events now took over: the North Western Road Car Company had its Operator's Licence cut back by some 50 vehicles as punishment for bad maintenance at Skelmersdale. The effect on Warrington depot was the loss of all double deckers, hitherto used for schools and stage duties. The school work passed to WBT and Barry Cooper, a local arm of the well known Manchester independent bus company of A. Mayne & Sons. The plan to close Haydock was only partly implemented in April, and about one third of the Gold Lines fleet and staff still continued to operate from there.

The next event of importance was an approach by North Western to Warrington Borough Transport to sue for peace. With hindsight, this clearly took place after the accountants had been looking at the figures, for the following week it was announced that the Brit-

ish Bus Group was to be sold, conditional upon any repercussions of allegations of financial impropriety against a British Bus board member being kept separate from the deal.

The result was a three phase withdrawal of "hostilities", taking place in June, July, and early September 1996. In exchange for a cessation of competition by Gold Line, WBT gave up the long routes to Wigan, Liverpool, Chester and Runcom, (all started as part of the war) and also relinquished five routes in the north eastern sector of the town (one was started as part of the war, another had been gained in the 1990 war, and three were traded off for North Western giving up the St.Helens-Warrington route), and the B1 to Lingley Green.

And what of the fare bargains? From 2nd September 1996, the £1.00 Dayrider ticket offered by North Western was increased to £2.50, which is of course available over a much decreased network. The children's fare goes from 50p to £1.50.

The Questions

Why did the lure of cheap fares not work? Why was the local company not rendered insolvent after six weeks?

It would be nice to think that the sentiments expressed in 1880 by the Warrington councillors still held good. An entrepreneurial company from out-of-town proposed a network of horse tramways, and was firmly told that the Corporation would not entertain others making a profit out of Warrington people. When Corporation owned electric trams came in 1902, they made a profit for 32 out of the next 33 years, and paid large sums into the rate fund. In a way, the same political thinking was present in 1995, for the Borough Council had no intention of selling off its transport undertaking, and backed managerial moves to keep it going. Cheshire has a well set up transport unit, and all three municipal operators, Chester, Halton (formerly Widnes) and Warrington still function.

Warrington responded robustly to the attack, and was fortunate in being surrounded by various towns to which it could operate routes and attack its opponent. It was also helped by that most difficult of things to quantify and harness - passenger loyalty. North Western admitted to the press that they had been surprised by the loyalty of the townspeople to the local company. WBT knew the ground, and the acute problems of running to time in a congested town. WBT kept good publicity, it kept the appearance of its vehicles consistent, and did not let itself be dragged into a reduction of fares. This latter point is very important, and was proved the correct course over a period lasting from January 1995 to September 1996. The current position of municipal bus companies does not allow for ongoing trading losses.

North Western clearly gambled and lost. They suffered from a bad local reputation. They made too many changes. Their "war" was intended to be a short one, and the tactics were no good for eighteen months of underpriced rides. They were backed by a large and powerful bus group with spare cash, and Warrington was an attractive catch in their area. It did not turn out to be as soft a target as was thought. Did no-one in the North Western organisation remember the lessons of 1990?

Using military terminology, Warrington attacked where least expected, and remained doggedly entrenched on its own ground and was not drawn into fare cutting, except for the introduction of a maximum urban return fare of £1.20 in January 1996. It brought in new weapons (new buses) for the out-of-town routes, and obtained reinforcements (second-hand buses) for the home ground. The Gold Lines operation made so many changes over the war period of 18 months that a future historian might say they did not know which way to turn. There may be an element of truth in this, because fighting a bus war was not a thing the North Western management had done before.

This article has been prepared before the real outcome can be judged. How the network will settle down in peace has yet to be seen. Whatever happens, the war has turned out to be multi-faceted, and a far cry from the bus racing of the 1920s.

END OF THE ROAD NEAR FOR MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

The Times ominously reported on Friday 13th September 1996 that the Department of Transport is likely to disappear soon. Rail privatisation, the creation of agencies for highways, maritime safety and coastguards, has left the Department with too little to do to merit a continued existence as a separate cabinet portfolio.

It seems likely that policy for roads, road safety and planning will pass to the Department of the Environment, and aviation, shipping, and the regulation of private transport companies will pass to the Department of Trade

Both of the major political parties seem to have the DoTs abolition in mind - the only problem seems to be that of finding a new cabinet portfolio to replace it, as neither party wishes to reduce the number of cabinet ministers.