

ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Although dispatched in 1998, this edition of the Newsletter relates to the subscription year 1997 and will be distributed accordingly. This edition consists mainly of feature articles, with Conference Business, and reports of presentations given etc. reserved for the next edition.

At the last meeting it was agreed among those present that the Newsletter should continue as it is, rather than include regular features on specific topics i.e. road passenger transport, freight transport, tramways etc. At the moment, each issue contains what material is to hand and in a form ready to publish.

If you wish to contribute to these columns please submit an item on your pet topic. Also, if you have a pet topic about which you wish to know some more, send along your incomplete article or write a request for help. There is a considerable amount of collective expertise among the membership. The item on Bence of Bristol in this issue is an example of a submission which produced information new to the writer. The item on lamp posts on page 2 is another example of "collective expertise".

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by the Roads and Road Transport
History Conference.
Issue No 15 will follow, and will
contain full details of meetings
held during 1997, and of the
Symposium to be held at
Coventry on Saturday October
18th, on the History of Road
Freight Transport.

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Conference Matters

The Spring 1998 Business Meeting of the R&RTHC will hopefully see the appointment of a new Secretary. Gordon Knowles has been seeking to retire from office for some time, and has stated that his resignation will be definite with effect from this meeting.

The Autumn Symposium at Coventry Museum of Road Transport on the subject of road freight transport was an enjoyable occasion marred by a fire alert in an adjacent building, which caused the need to evacuate the Museum, bringing an untimely end to one of the presentations. Reports on the presentations will form part of the next newsletter.

Work is proceeding on the proposed Companion to the Road Haulage Industry. This initiative is an important aspect of the work of this organisation: the bringing together of expertise to produce a "warts-free" publication.

Your Hon. Editor has been asked to help with an academic work listing notable examples of 20th Century architecture in Great Britain. The buildings are to be categorised according to use, and I have been asked to suggest notable examples of bus stations.

The obvious ones are London Victoria, both the Coliseum and Talbot Road at Blackpool, and the new one at Preston. Cheltenham and Bournemouth also spring to mind. I have yet to discuss whether or not some of the smaller "Home Counties" style of bus station qualify. Please write if you have any good suggestions.

Another question seeking an answer. Leyland Motors were regular users of the South Lancashire Transport Company's overhead wires at Walkden (on the A6) for testing trolleybuses. AEC had its own set of wires inside Southall, and B.U.T. trolleybuses built at Kingston-on-Thames were tested near Hampton Court. Were any other stretches of overhead wiring used by other manufacturers to test trolleybuses, in particular those intended for export? Apart from complete vehicles, Leyland drove chassis fitted with a tower, on which the trolley poles were mounted. It is presumed that payment for current was made on a mileage basis. Complete trolleybuses for London were towed south, and some are known to have been taken to the Kingston-on-Thames factory for repairs to damage sustained on route. These were presumably then driven under their own power to be handed over to L.T.

Old lamps live on...

A curious tale of bus stops in a Northern town

When in 1935 trams were to be abandoned in Warrington, the General Manager had a problem on his plate. The tramway standards, other than those which were in use for street lighting purposes, were to be uprooted and sold. All the stopping places were marked by white bands on the tramway standards.

The car shed (that was the official title shown on the notepaper) was a former gas works, and the Corporation Gas Committee still used some adjacent land. Pieces of this were purchased as the years went by to extend the bus parking space, and this was again done in 1935. The Tramways Manager no doubt was familiar with the plot, and noticed a pile of redundant gas lamps stacked ready for disposal.

He saw these as the answer to his problem, a deal was struck, and a quantity purchased for use as bus stops. Each post had a single arm, intended as a ladder rest for the lighting attendant. This was now used as a support for the bus stop "flag", in this case a cast plate bearing the words "Bus Stop Inward" or "Bus Stop Outward". The flags cost 17/6 each, and many gave some 40 years service.

The former gas lamp standards were distinctive in appearance, having a squat cast base, a post that was somewhat thicker than the norm for bus stops, the distinctive flag, and a squat finial sealing off the open top end. One at least still serves its purpose in Reynolds Street, Latchford, in early 1998, but now carries a modern enamelled flag. The cast flags disappeared some time ago. As well as the two mentioned above, there were some "one-off" variants used at terminal points with special wording. The one at the Central Station stand in Winwick Street was attached to a normal bus stop pole, as this terminus was one that was established before the 1935 spot purchase of old lamps.

My thanks to member W.d'Arcy Ryan for providing definitive photographic proof of one of the bus stops in its former life as a lamp-post. The type of lamp was not the more sturdy "traditional" gas lamp in the form of a lantern, but the type which had a swan's neck extension, from which was suspended a glass globe. I remember similar lamps during the war in Huyton, looking forlorn without the globe lights which had been removed "for the duration".

RAILWAYS AND ROAD SERVICES

A look across several decades at railways and the road services which appeared in the Official Timetables, which were run directly or run under the patronage of the Railway Company.

Should we regard the bus as the ungrateful offspring of the railway, which took away the railway's passengers? There is a longstanding association between the two modes of travel, as we shall see below. It is clear that in the early days of the motor bus, the railway was not hostile to what was seen as a useful feeder. There were already horsedrawn feeders (both carrier's carts and omnibuses) before the self propelled bus appeared. Because the new machines had an extended range and working day in comparison with the horsedrawn version, the feeders could be of greater length, and reach new destinations away from the railhead. The railways built hotels as part of a strategy to encourage travel, and excursions from country and seaside hotels were best effected by the motor bus (again often in replacement of horse drawn wagonettes).

This article looks, through the medium of some old railway timetables, at the role played by diverse road services in completing the travel networks of railways in three European countries. But it begins in Britain, with the GWR.

The Great Western Railway - Great Britain (1903)

The GWR was a pioneer in bringing buses to the countryside in Britain. Within the space of three years it went from owning a fleet of two buses to being a bus operator with a fleet rivalling that of any of the London motorbus companies. The first service of 1903 connected Helston with the Lizard, and began with two buses acquired from Sir George Newnes, who ran a bus service between Ilfracombe and the Blackmoor Station on the Lynton & Barnstaple Rly. Sir George built the funicular railway between Lynton and Lynmouth, and it must be assumed that the bus service was intended as part of an Ilfracombe to Lynton/Lynmouth link. (It is of interest that 95 years later Blackmoor Station still stands in the middle of nowhere, serving tourist/motorist needs.)

The Blackmoor service was abandoned because of police objections to speeds in excess of 8 m.p.h., and the GWR took on the buses on the grounds that they were cheaper to operate than to build a branch line. Even so, the railway was obliged to provide Cornwall C.C. with a steam roller in 1904 to ensure that the roads were fit for bus traffic. By the end of 1904 there were 34 buses owned by the GWR, and

by 1907 there were 95. Right from the start, the railway standardised on one make of chassis (Milnes-Daimler), although there were various types of bodies, ranging from fully open chars-a-bancs to London style double deckers. Many of the bodies were constructed in the Road Motor Shop at Swindon, and chassis and bodies were frequently swapped.

Services were started in numerous places that were served by the GWR, and a number of buses were decked out as mobile tourist offices, advertising the tourist areas that could be reached by the Company. One performed a 2,479 mile round trip to Scotland in the winter of 1907-8, advertising the Cornish Riviera, Devon, Ireland via Fishguard, mid-Wales, as well as hotels and excursion facilities. The buses were all operated from outstations, and all routes were feeders, like railless branch lines, to the GWR main lines. It was not the policy to run between destinations that were linked by rail, however circuitous the route might be, although it was discovered that in some instances such a service could increase traffic. By the 1914-8 War, many of the services were so well established that despite the restrictions of the times they were kept in operation. After the War, the services expanded again, and by the mid-twenties the bus fleet comprised some 300 units. Now, however, pressure was put on the services by the growth of many small independent and a few quite large bus companies, and towards the end of the decade, the question of the relationship between railways and buses became a political issue.

Eventually, the various GWR bus services were handed over to such as Crosville, Western National, Western Welsh, Thames Valley, Midland Red and Bristol Tramways. The last service directly operated by GWR, at Weymouth, ceased on 31/12/33, when it was passed over to Southern National. Of course, there was a continued cooperation between bus companies and the railways, although now both modes tended to act in their own self-interest. It is interesting to note that when the Southern Railway closed the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway in 1935, the replacing Southern National bus service used special buses with van compartments, quite common in Scotland but unusual in England.

Chemin de Fer d'Orleans - France - August 1930

The Orleans Company operated to the south and west of France from Paris, and in geographical terms is the equivalent of the GWR. The main lines went to Bordeaux and the south coast of Brittany. An important international service was that beyond Bordeaux to Spain, Portugal, and (via sea) onwards to Algeria and Tunisia. On these routes, the Orleans Company co-operated with other railways.

Looking at the timetable for 1930, there are

numerous examples of road services, some quite surprising. For example, 11 pages are devoted to motor services feeding stations (*services en correspondance*), but one and a half pages are devoted to **horse drawn** connections. The tabulation is in great detail, giving the fare charged, departure times from both ends, the distance and time taken by the road journey, ranging from six minutes to six and a half hours! (Judging by the distance involved, this was either by a very slow bus, or involved long breaks in the journey). Almost all services are marked as being provided by separate companies. Also worked by other companies were the tourist coach services (*services de tourisme en autocars*) from nine centres on the Orleans network. These were organised in the high season "as a continuation of railway services" and principally served the Loire Valley, Brittany, the Auvergne and Perigord. The administration of these coach services was based in Paris.

The Orleans Company operated from the Quai d'Orsay Station in Paris, and provided a special motor service from that station to the Gare du Nord for the conveyance of international passengers and their luggage. Other motor services operated instead of trains on some minor lines. The notes draw attention to the limited availability of seats on such services, and make clear which passengers would have priority should too many wish to travel. It is presumed that the substitution of a train by a bus in such cases indicates that only a few passengers normally made use of the facility. Certain other branch line services are noted as being made by railcars. The line to Poitiers from Saint Sulpice-Lauriere has a special (trial) bus service direct from Poitiers to Limoges, giving a five hour stay in Limoges. Although taking about the same time as a rail journey, it avoided the need to change and had limited stopping places. Clearly intended for excursionists.

Finally, there is a section of the timetable that is devoted to minor feeder lines. (*Lignes diverses en correspondance*) Most of these are steam or electric roadside tramways, the majority of which would have become bus services within the decade following the currency of the timetable. It was only because of the legislation which allowed French departements to construct such lines that many such tenuous links were built in the first place....in other countries they would have been road services from the outset. Most have only three or four departures a day, and many contain workings in connection with monthly fairs, some with special conditions of amazing complexity. One is left wondering if extra staff were employed on fair days to see that all conditions were met, or did everyone just crowd on? One line had a halt (*arret conditionel*, a common feature on these minor lines) at which only

passengers without luggage or dogs and going to or from the inner terminal point at Blois could board, on Sundays or Bank Holidays only. Many of these lines used rail-cars, some were rural electric tramways, so luggage and passenger carrying capacity was limited, and many needed only one train or vehicle to run the whole line, they were surely built "faute d'autobus".

Horario Guia de Ferrocarriles- Spain-March 1959

Sold for 25 pesetas (then approx. 2/6d) this Spanish Railway Guide listed every railway line on broad and narrow gauge (in that order), but also has some national air timetables too. There is no direct mention of road services, but the timetable recognises lines long closed to railed traffic and replaced by road services, and also gives much fine detail on minor lines which, had they not been located in Spain, would have been long closed and substituted, (as they are now), by buses. All the suburban lines out of Valencia (essentially tramways) are shown, but one line is "suspended, and worked by Valencia tram routes 4 and 14" The line from San Sebastian to the French frontier is annotated "There is also a bus service from S.S. (Calle de Penafiorida) to Irun, and between San Sebastian and Repteria there is a **constant** service of urban trolleybuses." The closed line S.S. to Hernani is shown as a bus route, but the closed line S.S. to Pamplona (by then bus operated) is shown as "closed" The Bilbao-Durango line has a substantial annotation which gives fares and times for the TBDA interurban tramway, which was part parallel and part feeder. The suburban tramways at Vigo, Granada, Ubeda are given in full, and lines such as Pontevedra-Marin, steam worked until 1924, are recognised....."From Pontevedra to Marin there is a service of trolleybuses, every 20 minutes" (It is not sufficiently detailed to mention that the trolleybuses were Leylands built for use in Canton).

The index shows La Coruna and El Carballo as being served by TABLE 284. The timetable pages pass from TABLE 283 to 285. So what is missing? The answer is another trolleybus service, built instead of a railway and operating a goods service over its 33 kilometre route (and served by ex London double deckers in the sixties). This line was opened using German equipment during the Second World War, and had covered stations at El Carballo, La Coruna and a midway point. Elsewhere at Castellon, there was an interurban trolleybus route which did replace a narrow gauge railway.

The Horario Guia is deficient in not making mention of the fact that the Spanish National Railways did operate bus routes in lieu of gaps in the network of railways. Spanish railways tend to radiate out from Madrid, and certain major cities were

left without a direct passenger service by rail to an adjacent (if distant) city. An example is Valencia to Alicante. In such instances, an express bus service was provided by an outside contractor, but the vehicles carried a board inscribed "RENFE". The service taken as an example was worked by La Union de Benisa S.A., a company based at the small town of Benisa, mid-way between the two cities served. This company found itself very fortunate in the age of the motor car because its route passed through the ever growing seaside resort of Benidorm. It now uses the fleet name "UBESA", an acronym. As far as is known, only one bus route was directly operated by RENFE, that being a service from Badajoz to Cordoba via Llerena, where the vehicles were based.

Without the subsidiary bus services, some trips would have been of intolerable length. Even main lines were slow before the improvements started in the sixties, and there were several high class express services which ran parallel to railway lines, using high quality coaches and patronised by those who did not wish to fly, even though they could afford to do so. One such was the Madrid- Alicante service worked by Chaco, otherwise the Compania Hispano Americano de Comercio S.A., whose name suggests it had its origins in shipping links with South America.

GUIA OFICIAL C.P. - Portugal - August 1969

The official guide of the Portuguese Railways (C.P.) contains the following timetables.

- 1-44 Rail services
- 45-50 International rail services
- 51-56 International rail services outside the country.
- A-M Bus services for which C.P. hold the licences.
- 65-227 Bus services provided by others serving (feeding) the rail network.

There is an index of places served by rail separate from another of places served by bus. In its day, the C.P. guide was a most useful travel aid for how to get from A to B, A being the place where you were, and B being any place of other than very minor importance.

The second section includes the service from Lisbon to Seville, which includes certain journeys by bus. The trip is broken at the frontier on the Guadiana River (crossed by ferry), and some C.P. trains were met by bus rather than train on the Spanish side. The notes reveal (in both the RENFE and CP guides) that the Barreiro - Lisbon stretch of the journey was also a ferry. Curiously, because of the fare structure on C.P., the timetable calls the ferries "Trams" (i.e. having the same cheap fares as suburban stopping services) A linguistic note: the Spanish word for tram

(*tranvia*) was copied by the Portuguese, in whose language a street tram is called "electrico", for showing a suburban stopping train. The same name is used on tickets and timetables for the frequent railway ferry services from Lisbon to Barreiro.

Tables A-M refer to eleven bus routes operated by the railway itself or by outside companies under contract. C.P. did own a small fleet of buses, and this was greatly expanded in the early seventies in order to replace certain narrow gauge railways. Before this, the railway bus routes were used, as in Spain, to link up centres between which geography or change of gauge made through journeys difficult by rail. Tickets for the buses were purchased at the booking offices of terminal stations, but conductors carried tickets for intermediate journeys.

Tables 65-227 listed bus services for which the licences were held by bus companies. When these applied for a road service licence, the route was given one of the following classifications:

Urbana (urban)

Concorrente (running on a route parallel to an existing railway)(*see below*)

Afluente (feeding a railway)

Afluente e concorrente (feeding a railway, and part running parallel to it)

Independente (operating entirely between points not served by railways)

Eventual (special service to football matches, race meetings, annual festivals etc.)

It will be clear from this that the railways were, at the time, strongly shielded from competition by road services. Buses were not allowed to work between points served by railway over the same route. Take for example the services operated by Stagecoach on the coast west of Lisbon. The coastal towns are served by a very frequent service of electric trains. Although Stagecoach buses work into seven adjacent small towns, there are no direct bus services between any of them. The routes form feeders into the various stations. The protective shield of the railways has been broken on long distance services, however, and the closure of some lines has opened up certain areas.

Some explanation is needed of the above term "concorrente". A road service licence would only be granted for such a service if it operated, perhaps over part of a rail route, at times when a train service could not be provided. In fact, such a service would be a feeder from A to B, connecting to a train to C, at a time when the train was coming from D, via B to C. The bus routes which C.P. operated were not always "concorrente", as they might take short cuts away from the rail route. Many of the railways were contour hugging and therefore circuitous.

BOOK REVIEW

PAGEFIELD MOTOR VEHICLES, by Tom Meadows, published by the Author, 8 St.Mary's Gate, Wistaston, Crewe, CW2 8HH. 128 pp, card back, 9.5 ins x 6.5 ins.

This book is written by an engineer, a former employee of Walker Brothers of Wigan, builders of a range of specialist road and rail vehicles, some well known to transport enthusiasts, such as the County Donegal railcars, and other less well known, such as the emergency winding gear for mines (i.e. a sort of heavy duty mobile winch).

In fact one of the main product lines of the Company was mining equipment, in particular ventilating fans, but from the start of this century there was a steady output of motor vehicles, most of which carried the badge "Pagefield" taken from the name of Company's Works. Private cars, vans, tipping wagons, chars- a -bancs, extra narrow vehicles for refuse collection capable of penetrating narrow back alleys, and military subsidy vehicles formed the main production in the period before 1920.

In 1922 in conjunction with the Borough Engineer from Southport, a refuse collecting lorry of a special type was evolved. This had a ramp and winch, and could pick up horse drawn wagons, full of refuse, to transport them from the site of collection to the tip or destructor. This allowed the horse and team of men to carry on collecting refuse with an empty wagon. The system was supplied on any type of chassis, but usually on Pagefields. Later a tractor capable of moving laden railway wagons in sidings was evolved, which was a sort of "ro-rail" machine with wheels arranged to suit the gauge of the track. Power for this was the well-known Gardner 6LW.

By 1930, pneumatic tyres were being fitted, and some buses that were Leyland Lion lookalikes were supplied to Wigan Corporation. For a while the production of Gardner engined lorries was considerable (in the terms of the firm's output) and small-wheeled types were produced for the municipal market, under the names of "Paladin" and "Prodigy". Other names starting with the letter P were applied to haulage vehicles, but the "Crusader" was a mobile crane which ran to site on pneumatic tyres, towing a trailer behind containing solid tyred wheels which were fitted before lifting commenced.

Also in the thirties there was a cooperation with Atkinsons, who were involved for a while with locomotives for railways. Walker Brothers saw at this point an opportunity to use Gardner engines to power

railed vehicles, and built the first of many passenger railcars, many of which ran in Ireland.

Production of road vehicles and railcars continued after the Second World War until it ceased in 1960. The book is profusely illustrated by photographs, advertisements, copies of letters and diagrams and an attempt has been made to juxtapose the text with the relevant illustrations. Unfortunately this makes for a disjointed story, with lots of blank spaces where the text is broken to insert the illustrated items. By adjusting the size of some of the pictures, it would have been possible to reduce the number of pages needed to tell this unusual and fascinating story.

LONDON'S UTILITY BUSES, by Ken Blacker, Capital Transport, Harrow Weald. 176 pp, hard back, 11 ins x 8.5 ins (sub-A4) £19.95

This book is profusely illustrated, and tells the complete story (from cradle to the grave) of the 756 utility buses purchased by London Transport between 1941-1946. Each type, Leyland TD7, Bristol K5G, Guy Arab, Bristol K6A and Daimler CW/CV types are dealt with in detail, with photographs of interiors as well as exteriors, showing every change made to these buses over their working lives in London.

The final chapters trace the history of those vehicles sold for further service at home and abroad. Many, notably those in Belfast and Edinburgh, were rebodied, and some in Scotland were lengthened and turned into single deckers. Those sold abroad were also rebuilt in some cases, notably Guy Arabs used as single deckers in the Canary Islands and the then Southern Rhodesia. Strangest of all was the fate of some Daimlers in Sri Lanka, which finished their lives as lorries, still fitted with half width cabs. If there is a weakness in this book, it is the story of those buses abroad, for the author has set himself such a high standard in the earlier part, covering the subject in such depth.

This book is a "must" for the enthusiast of the London bus, and is equally a "must" for the student of the utility double deck vehicles of the Second World War. It would be nice if a similar volume could be produced for all the rest of the utility vehicles built, but not all operators had such prolific in house photographers as London Transport, nor did any other city have such a large band of amateur vehicle recorders on the streets. In his introduction, the author refers to one such enthusiast who taught him the need to record things photographically or in written detail. How important this is! The easiest way to avoid the speculative theories of the future is to record and preserve NOW. This book is testimony to a record well kept and now beautifully edited into a handsome volume.

ARP

For the Record....

A list of road freight companies owned by the the big four railway companies, and which were passed to the Road Haulage Executive.

Hays Wharf Cartage Co. Ltd.
 Carter Paterson and Co. Ltd.
 T. Ball & Co. Ltd.
 Beans Express Ltd.
 Carter Paterson (Midland) Ltd.
 Carter Paterson (North Western) Ltd.
 Carter Paterson (Southern) Ltd.
 City & Suburban Carriers Ltd.
 Englands & Perrots Ltd.
 Express Motor & Body Works Ltd.
 Herd & Gerner Ltd.
 Hernu, Peron & Stockwell Ltd.
 Karriers Parcels Delivery Ltd.
 Leicester & County Carriers Ltd.
 Liverpool Parcel Delivery Co. Ltd.
 London Parcels Delivery Co. Ltd.
 South Coast Carriers Ltd.
 Southern Carriers Ltd.
 Sutton & Co. Ltd (50%)
 Sutton & Co.(Manchester) Ltd. (50%)
 Swift Parcel Delivery Service Ltd.
 T. & D. Carriers Ltd.
 Venn & McPherson Ltd.
 Pickfords Ltd.
 Arthur Batty Ltd.
 Benefit Tyre Co. Ltd.
 H. Bentley & Co. (Bradford) Ltd.
 Chaplins Ltd.
 Coulson & Co. Ltd.
 Crouchers Ltd. (I.o.W.)
 Express Transport Service
 (Wellingborough) Ltd.
 Garlick, Burrell & Edwards Ltd.
 A.J.Hewett & Co. Ltd.
 Hughes Bros Ltd.
 Pickfords France S.A. (Paris)
 Shepherd Bros (I.o.W.)

Currie & Co. (Newcastle) Ltd.
 Joseph Nall & Co. Ltd.
 James Petrie Ltd.
 Wordie & Co. Ltd.
 Herbert Davidson Ltd.
 James Dickson Ltd.
 Dumfries & Galloway Transport Ltd.
 Road Engines & Kerr Ltd.
 John Russell & son
 South Western Transport Ltd.

The following list is of 30 companies regarded as "household names" which were taken over by the R.H.E. These were listed by Quick Smith as being worthy of being recorded for posterity.

A. V. Hill Ltd.
 Bouts-Tillotson Ltd.
 Bristol Haulage Ltd.
 Bulk Haulage Ltd.
 C. A. & F. Cook Ltd.

 Chesterfield Transport
 Currie & Co (Newcastle) Ltd.
 Davies & Brownlow Ltd.
 Eastern Roadways Ltd.
 Ex-Army Transport Ltd.

 Fisher-Renwick Ltd.
 Hills Storage (Melton) Ltd.
 Holdsworth & Burrill Ltd.
 Holdsworth & Hanson Ltd.
 John Crocock Ltd.

 Joseph Hanson Ltd.
 Manchester Storage & Transport Co.
 McNamara & Co. Ltd.
 Metropolitan Storage & Supply Co. Ltd.
 North Western Transport Services Ltd.

 O.K.Carrier Co. Ltd.
 Ormesher & Timpson Ltd.
 P.X.Limited
 South Coast Carriers Ltd.
 Southern Roadways Ltd.

 Sutton & Co. (Manchester) Ltd.
 Swindon Transport Co.
 Taunton Transport Service Ltd.
 Wallsend Road Haulage Ltd.
 Warrington Transport Ltd.

The RRTHC is currently working on the project to produce a history of road freight transport. If you have any additions, comments etc. to the above list, please write to Professor J. Armstrong, or contact any of the other members of the team i.e.

Messrs John Aldridge
 Grahame Boyes
 Arthur Ingram
 Gordon Musdtoe
 Richard Storey

WARRINGTON CORPORATION TRAMWAYS AND STOCKTON HEATH LIGHT RAILWAYS

Manager, Mr. J. Telfer ; Electrical Engineer and Tramways Engineer, Mr. F. V. L. Mathias. Cash
Office, Cairo street ; Car Shed, Mersey street ; Electrical Works, Howley.

TIME TABLE

Sankey and Latchford

| Routes | FIRST CAR | | | LAST CAR | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| | Week-days | Sat | Sun | Week-days | Sat | Sun |
| | a.m. | a.m. | a.m. | p.m. | p.m. | p.m. |
| Rylands Street to Sankey | --- | 7.30 | 7.30 9.30 | --- | 11.0 | 11.30 10.30 |
| Sankey to Rylands Street | --- | 7.40 | 7.40 9.40 | --- | 11.15 | 11.45 10.45 |
| Rylands Street to Latchford | --- | 7.30 | 7.30 9.30 | --- | 11.0 | 11.50 10.50 |
| Latchford to Rylands Street | --- | 7.45 | 7.45 9.45 | --- | 11.15 | 11.45 11.45 |
| | { Rylands street to Sankey. 5.10, 5.40, 6.10, 6.40, 7.10 a.m. | | | | | |
| EARLY | { Sankey to Rylands-street. 5.25, 5.55, 6.25, 6.50, 7.20 a.m. | | | | | |
| CARS | { Rylands street to Latchford. 5.10, 5.40, 6.10, 6.40, 7.0 a.m. | | | | | |
| | { Latchford to Rylands-street. 5.25, 5.55, 6.25, 6.55, 7.15 a.m. | | | | | |

Cars start from each terminus every ten minutes throughout the day.

Fares : 1d. each way.

Stockton Heath

| Routes | FIRST CAR | | | LAST CAR | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------|------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| | Week-days | Sat | Sun | Week-days | Sat | Sun |
| | a.m. | a.m. | a.m. | p.m. | p.m. | p.m. |
| Rylands Street to Stockton Heath | 7.15 | 7.15 | 9.25 | --- | 11.5 | 11.35 10.35 |
| RETURN | | | | | | |
| Stockton Heath to Rylands Street | 7.30 | 7.30 | 9.40 | --- | 11.20 | 11.50 10.50 |
| EARLY | { From Rylands-street to Stockton Heath. 5.15, 5.45, 6.15, 6.45 a.m. | | | | | |
| CARS | { From Stockton Heath to Rylands-street. 5.30, 6.0, 6.30, 7.0 a.m. | | | | | |
| | { Between Rylands-street and Stockton Heath --- 1½ d. each way | | | | | |
| FARES | { Between Rylands street and Stafford road --- 1d. " " | | | | | |
| | { Between Stafford road and Stockton Heath --- ½ d. " " | | | | | |

Cars start from each terminus every ten minutes throughout the day.

Cemetery and Longford

| Routes | FIRST CAR | | | LAST CAR | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|
| | Week-days | Sat | Sun | Week-days | Sat | Sun |
| | a.m. | a.m. | a.m. | p.m. | p.m. | p.m. |
| Central Station to Cemetery | --- | 7.35 | 7.35 9.35 | 11.5 | 11.35 | 10.35 |
| Cemetery to Central Station | --- | 7.45 | 7.45 9.45 | 11.15 | 11.45 | 10.45 |
| Central Station to Longford | --- | 7.30 | 7.30 9.30 | 11.0 | 11.30 | 10.30 |
| Longford to Central Station | --- | 7.37 | 7.37 9.37 | 11.10 | 11.40 | 10.40 |

WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS ONLY. On Cemetery route after 11. 5. a.m. three cars will run, which will alter the times from Central Station to even times, that is 11. 10, 11. 20, 11. 30 , and every ten minutes until 7. 10 p.m. on Wednesdays, and 11. 50 p.m. on Saturdays.

The times of starting from Cemetery will remain unaltered.

EARLY { From Central Station to Cemetery 5. 15, 5. 40, 6. 45, 7. 15 a.m.

CARS { From Cemetery to Central Station 5. 30, 5. 50, 7. 0, 7. 25 a.m.

Cars start from Central Station every ten minutes to Cemetery, and every fifteen minutes to Longford, throughout the day. Fares : 1 d. each way.

RETURN TICKETS may be purchased on all routes by passengers riding before 8 a.m.

These tickets are available for the return journey on any route at any time after 2. p.m. on the day of issue only, and after 12 o'clock noon on Saturdays.

RETURN FARES on Sankley, Latchford, Cemetery, Longford, and Wilderspool (Stafford-road) routes, 1d. either way. Stockton Heath 1½ d. either way.

Facsimile of Timetable for 1913

WARRINGTON CORPORATION TRAMWAY TIMETABLE 1913

The timetable shown opposite represents the tram service in Warrington from 1905 until the start of the First World War. Ideally the routes, radiating north, south, east and west., with the fifth route going south west, would have crossed in the town centre, but the narrowness of the streets prevented this, and instead the system was built in two parts, linked only by the tracks to the car shed. The west and south routes were joined (Sankey and Latchford) and the east and north routes were joined (Cemetery and Longford). The south-western route (Stockton Heath) was joined with west and south lines, and had a town terminus near Rylands Street, but this point was a five minute walk from the other town terminus at Central Stn.

Because traffic was poor on the Longford route, through running with Cemetery cars ceased in 1904 (the system opened in 1902), and thereafter cars reversed at Central Stn. In 1922, after some widening of the town centre streets, the Cemetery route was diverted to meet with the Stockton Heath line. The through service only lasted a few weeks, as the Stockton Heath route crossed a railway on the level and a canal by a swing bridge, and was sometimes subject to severe delays. Through running was therefore discontinued, and from early in 1923 this small tramway system of just 6 miles was essentially worked in three sections.

Despite its small size, the system was very efficient and very profitable. The termini were at the borough boundary, which did not represent the point where town and country met, so that plenty of potential passengers were drawn in to the tramway which was never extended into the outer and more thinly populated parts. It is on record that cars on the shortest route (Cemetery) would leave almost full at times, whilst the poorly patronised Longford route had its greatest traffic during the First World War, when it "served" a military hospital over a mile beyond the bleak terminus. This terminus was in a sparsely populated part of town, which was the site of the Gas Works, Sewage Works, and some tanneries, and the actual end of the line was bestride a bridge over a water course known as "The Stinker". Usually worked by a single car, three were needed on Sundays in the 1916-8 period. Eventually the line was abandoned on the last day of 1931, the Corporation allowing L.U.T. (Lancashire United) to run buses over the route and beyond. Housing development and the closure of the malodorous industries later brought Corporation buses back to this part of town.

The Tramway Review is currently publishing a four part history of the Tramways of Warrington, 1902-1935, by Roy Brooke and Ron Phillips, with maps, illustrations, information on rolling stock and tickets. Despite much research two questions remain unanswered. Why did Warrington trams have higher saloons (at 7 feet) than the norm? Why did Warrington trams have oil fired signal lamps (red at the rear, and white in front, with a green aspect to be shown by cars standing in a loop). Such bulkhead mounted lights were usually fitted with electric bulbs, except in some cases on tramcars which ran on unlit country roads, which the Warrington ones did not. Anyone able to suggest answers please write to Ron Phillips!

Messages on a POSTCARD

Subject of Card: US Lines S.S. "Leviathan"

Addressee: Miss A. Kettering
Winchester Road
Four Marks, Hants

Postmark: Teddington, 31st July 1923

Dear Alice,

You will be surprised to hear E. and I are going to Southampton to go aboard the ship that's on the card. We shall pass your house on the way, by char a banc coach. We will look out for you and all.

As before, weather permitting, I will cycle down on Sunday, back Monday.

Arthur.

Subject of card: Standishgate, Wigan, with tram.

Addressee: Miss F. Creak
Queens Drive,
Liverpool 18

Postmark: Liverpool, 25th February 1942

What about Saturday? Full moon. Have written to Frances. I take no excuse - bar evacuation. Excuse the picture post card - but there's a war on!

E.

The first card reveals something of traffic on the London - Southampton route in 1923, but the second is of great interest on both sides. The picture is of a narrow gauge tram in Standishgate, and was therefore taken 1902-1905. Wigan started by laying its tramways to a narrow gauge, but then changed to the standard gauge, and converted some, but not all lines to the wider dimension. The message contains allusions to various wartime issues, the blackout, the need for economy (using an old picture post card) and to evacuation. Both cards refer to "E", who is almost certainly not the same person!

HISTORICAL BOOK REVIEW

LONDON's BUSES, The Story of a Hundred Years, compiled by Vernon Sommerfield, The St.Catherine Press, 1933, 118 pp, illustrated. Price 1/-

This book was written as the London General Omnibus Company was about to be subsumed into the LPTB in 1933. It tells the story of the London bus from Shillibeer (1829) as far as what the author describes as "this Jazz and cocktail Age" through the eyes of an academic historian, but is nonetheless a very pleasant and informative read.

There is more about horse buses than motor buses, as two thirds of the 100 years covered were dominated by the horse drawn vehicle, and the author seems to prefer olden times to modern times. He does manage to quote from some who knew horse buses, and there is quite a lot of insight into what went on behind the scenes. Like most historians, he is at pains to point out how history is wont to repeat itself, citing the unbridled competition of the 1850s (a truly unregulated age) and the similar problems of the motor bus competition of the twenties. From our view point, we could perhaps suggest that it happens in a 70 year cycle, and look forward to the creation of the new GLTB in the first decade of the next century!

It is a bit surprising to learn of how the French based *Compagnie Generale des Omnibus de Londres* bought up a huge fleet of horse buses in the period following the Great Exhibition of 1851. That same exhibition saw a surge of profiteering bus operators charging high fares for transport to and from the Hyde Park show ground, and the author attributes the same exhibition as creating the double decker, so eager were the busmen to maximise the capacity of the vehicles. The knifeboard double decker invented by the English was dominant for some twenty years before the garden seat double decker was copied from the Continent. The low capacity of the horse bus, with about 16-18 seats inside, and the need for so many horses per bus owned, kept the fares high, so that it was in no way a "people's carriage".

The *Compagnie Generale* renamed itself after a couple of years, but still was susceptible to French influence. There was a period when prepaid coupons with a ten percent discount were sold, and there was a "correspondence" (English spelling) system to allow transfer from one bus to another to make some journeys across the city. No tickets were issued before 1891 on General buses, although a few other London operators had introduced them earlier. The author seems to think that one reason for this practice

came from the days of the stagecoach. The guard was the servant who came into contact with the passengers, and it was quite common to give him a tip. On buses, particularly in the period after the Crimean War, which was the time when the LGOC was first set up, many of the guards were ex servicemen, and were trusted by their middle class customers. As the years went by, the custom and practice of guards collecting the fares without issuing tickets, and handing the money in less the wages for the driver and himself, became fixed as the norm, and the guards, it is said, went to great pains to see that they handed in a credible amount at the end of each day. Eventually, the invention of the bell punch brought an end to this, although there was a brief strike by the men for seven days in protest at the move. According to the author, it was still the practice to tip the conductor on Berlin trams in the twenties. (Can anyone comment on this?)

The period of the motor bus is perhaps thought of as too recent for treatment in depth, and little is said of the long series of experiments in order to evolve a reliable vehicle to replace horse traction. Absolutely no mention is made of the role of the Metropolitan Police in the evolution of the London bus, nor the creation of AEC. There is, however, an interesting account of how a bus passed through Chiswick Works, and how drivers and conductors were trained.

There are some interesting sideshows. We have doggerel and cartoons on the subject of London's buses, there is a list of the horse bus route colours (the famous red came in with motor buses), and some pages of advertisements of products advertised widely on decency boards and staircases. One cartoon features a gentleman passenger addressed by the conductor ("on latest de luxe motor bus"- either an ST or LT). The artist captures perfectly the fine modern interior of what were, externally, rather old fashioned vehicles. It was not until the advent of the Greenline coaches of 1936-7 and the RT that London buses were modernised on the outside, but it must be said that the interiors, especially in regard to staircase and rear platform layout, were way ahead of what other bus operators were doing at the time.

Finally, one fact which is touched upon but not discussed in depth. Although tramways were expensive to set up, they offered cheap fares. Certain areas of London were denied tramways for various reasons, and this meant that cheap fares were unknown for a full decade in these parts of the conurbation. It was only after 1910 and the merging of General and Underground interests that there were cheaper fares and coordination between surface bus and sub-surface heavy rail.

This slim volume is well worth reading if you can get hold of a copy.

ARP

THE ROYAL ROAD, by Robert Allan, Isaac Pitman, London, 1946, hardback, illustrated.

Belying its rather grand title, this was a modest little book, produced at a time when austerity still ruled in the publishing industry; colour photographs in books were then unheard of, and the illustrations it did contain were not works of art, but purely informative.

Furthermore, there were clear indications that it had been conceived as a propaganda exercise for the road transport industry; with a Labour government newly elected, the threat of nationalisation was looming. Despite these limitations the book contained much of great interest and even lasting value, including a generous sprinkling of statistics.

A lengthy chapter described the growth of road transport in Britain, with some mention of developments elsewhere in Europe, from c.2000 BC up to September 1939, laying considerable stress on its extreme importance, entirely unappreciated by the country's rulers of August 1914 during the First World War. Many famous and still remembered names appeared there, such as Chaplin & Horne, Pickfords, Carter Paterson, Joseph Nall and Thompson & McKay. The essential role played by the road haulage industry, then largely non-unionised, in various strikes, including the General Strike of 1926, was made clear, with many facts in support.

One revealing anecdote from this period may point to continuing ignorance on the part of the authorities about the "new" form of transport, or lax military discipline! A soldier on escort duty, sitting astride a petrol tanker, was seen to light a cigarette and smoke it to the end.

After this came mention of the various steps in legislative control, in particular the 1930 Act and its successor of 1933. In the context of such a book, the author's reference to the Railways' "Square Deal" campaign of 1938 and later was notably restrained. On a personal note, this reviewer was appalled in 1940 to see posters deriding the bus industry's wartime blackout difficulties displayed on railway station hoardings.

A subsequent chapter, entitled "War on Wheels", possibly the *raison d'être* for the book, began on a depressing note, dwelling on the continued failure of the civil authority to realise the importance of road haulage, and of its blinkered military counterpart to appreciate its limitations: ignorance ruled! A more optimistic note was sounded with the appearance in Government of two strong character, Winston Churchill and Herbert Morrison; perhaps Ernest Bevin should have been named too.

Bearing in mind the danger of making this review as long as the book itself, room should be found

to mention the chapter "Hauliers with a History", containing such names as Springfield Carriers, the famous Wynns of Newport, H. & G. Dufield, Thomas Allen, Crow Carrying Co., noted pioneers in bulk liquid transport, and others.

All of it was of course written long before atmospheric pollution had become seen as a threat. With hindsight, echoing the words of "1066 and All That", road motor transport was perhaps a bad thing, but the book has a tale worth telling. JED

BUSMAN'S VIEW, by C.R. Wason, George Allen & Unwin, 1958, pp154, original price not known.

I first came to know this book some 35 years ago, when a friend lent me a library copy. I enjoyed it immensely then, again when I obtained my own copy, and even now, although many of the practices described there and the problems they gave rise to, have vanished into the mists of time. Some do remain, as does the refreshing pleasure of dipping into it yet again. Nobody critical of some bus drivers, as I am, can read it without gaining awareness of the difficulties they continue to face.

The author, it is clear, was uniquely qualified to write such a book. He was acutely observant, with a good sense of humour, already experienced in driving motor cars, fast cars too, and with a level of literacy which puts some present day writers of "bus books" to shame. He came to bus work well into middle age (46), when almost immediately following a move to a new job in a new area, the business collapsed. Other jobs were not easy to find, but the combination of low pay and unsociable hours made bus conducting a possibility and, after surmounting the age hurdle, he was accepted by the local municipal undertaking.

The ins and outs of a conductor's task, those created by passengers, others by drivers, and the all important matter of safeguarding the takings, are graphically and lucidly described. In time, promotion to driving duties followed, although conducting and extensive experience of handling fast cars with crash gearboxes were together not regarded as matching HGV driving skill. Once accepted, though, a further view unfolded, of overhanging trees, lamp posts etc. which were to be avoided, of timekeeping niceties, of routes to be followed without any prior knowledge (still a problem!), of more passenger idiosyncracies, and now conductors too.

Summing up, the book describes vividly many of the day to day realities of bus operation around 40 years ago, some of them still applicable to 1998. The author was punctilious to avoid identification of the transport undertaking in question, but one or two clues remain which allow the knowledgeable reader to do so JED



This outline note on a unique urban fringe bus operator was produced initially for limited distribution to a Bristol audience by John Dunabin, with a request for further information. None was forthcoming, but a few gaps have since been filled by R. Atkinson and the Hon. Editor.

W.J. Bence & Sons Ltd. of Longwell Green, Bristol, was incorporated on 24th July 1924 (199501), but according to a *Motor Transport Yearbook* entry the business had begun services as early as 1918.

Bence Motor Services Ltd., originally also of Longwell Green, but later of High Street, Hanham, was incorporated on 24th March, 1930 (246952). The directors of the Company were now Donald E. Lyddon (Secretary), and James F. Sambles, and there were only two shareholders, obviously the same persons. In fact the Company was now under the control of the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Co., but it continued to trade as a separate entity until 29th June 1936, when it was absorbed by the parent company.

Bence ran a number of local bus services on the eastern outskirts of Bristol, most of them connecting with the tramways to and from the city centre. The September 1935 timetable showed them as:

Hanham - Kingswood - Staple Hill - Downend

Journey time 22 minutes.

Daily, every hour.

Keynsham - Willsbridge - Longwell Green -

Hanham - Kingswood - Staple Hill - Downend

Journey time 37 minutes

Daily, every hour, times coordinated with those of the Hanham - Downend service.

Keynsham - Willsbridge - Oldland - Warmley Stn - Bridgegate - Kingswood

Journey time 30 minutes.

Daily, every hour.

Bitton - Oldland - Cadbury Heath - Warmley Stn - Kingswood

Journey time 30 minutes.

Daily, every hour.

Hanham - Longwell Green - Cadbury Heath - Warmley Stn - Siston Common - Staple Hill

Journey time 29 minutes

Daily, every hour.

Keynsham - Willsbridge - Bitton

Journey time 13 minutes.

Daily, every hour., connecting journeys on the Keynsham - Kingswood and Kingswood - Bitton services.

Cadbury Heath - Warmley Stn - Kingswood

Journey time 15 minutes.

Additional service, Saturdays and Sundays, late afternoon and evenings, every thirty minutes.

Hanham - Kingswood - Staple Hill - Downend - Westerleigh - Yate

Journey time 45 minutes.

Tuesdays and Saturdays only, with two return journeys.

Hanham (Tram terminus) - Hanham Weir

Saturdays and Sundays only.

This service was stated to run at frequent intervals from 6 pm onwards (possibly until the last passenger, or at least until the last retrun tram from Hanham to the city.) Single fare 2d.

Hanham Weir on the River Avon was clearly a pleasure resort for Bristolians. the Company itself had a "splendid" cafe and grotto at the bus stop capable of hosting wedding receptions, whilst the *Chequers Inn* offered music, dancing, boating and fishing.

The timetable booklet contained other advertisements too. One was for *Bert's Garage*, Hanham, (prop. Albert Bence), and another for *William Jones and Bence* of Bristol (established over 150 years), motor body builders and repairers. Neither of these Bences may have been closely related to the founders of the bus business, but about a third there was no doubt. This advertisement was for W.J. Bence Ltd. (Bence Bodies), of Longwell Green. Even this was not all. For good measure, Bence Motor Services Ltd., at the Tramway Terminus, Hanham, also offered "expert attention to private and commercial vehicles."

After the absorption in 1936 (the voluntary winding up was 1st July 1936, the final meeting was in December 1936) the Bence name did not vanish for some time.. The BT&CCo timetable for 1938 showed six services, numbered 300-305, under the heading "Bence Motor Services" (elsewhere in the timetable as "Bence Motors"). The tables showed some minor changes, such as an increase in frequency on Saturday evenings between Hanham and Downend, from fifteen to seven and a half minutes, an extension of the Yate service some two miles north to Rangeworthy, and no mention of the route to Hanham Weir. By ingenious timetabling, in Bence days, the Keynsham - Downend service had been interworked. This was now made clear, to the *cognoscenti*, if not to the intended user, with a Kingswood - Oldland - Keynsham - Hanham - Kingswood - Staple Hill - Downend through service.

The fleet of buses numbered 17 at absorption, mostly seating about 30, some with Bence bodies, but the *Motor Transport Year Book* 1931-2 gives a total of 25 vehicles owned. It may be that some coaches were not taken into the BT&CCo fleet.

Travel needs

The advertisements below, taken from a travel guide, recommend paper tissues ("for your case or haversack, pleasing as silk"), anti-insect ointment ("as used by Royalty"), travel services ("escorted or independent") and the strangely named "Scenaicator", whose exact nature is not plain. It was a device that was attached to the coach windscreen frame, a sort of roller blind under the command of the driver, whose hat is shown emblazoned with the title "Mr Ever-So-Quiet",

Does the driver's hat imply that some char-a-banc passengers found the driver too intrusive? After all, in charge of an open air coach and without the aid of a public address system, he would have need to shout to overcome the noise of the engine, gearbox, and (often) the back axle, let alone the effects of the

wind and the noise from other road users. Of course, it was customary in less hectic times to pull over and stop to explain the view. Did a driver with this device simply stop and activate it?

The advertisement, in the opening statement, suggests that char-a-banc passengers were not always looking happy. Apart from the need to put up with the weather, and a shouting driver, there was that compulsory stop for a group photograph, usually at the start so that the photographer could retire to his dark-room to produce prints to sell at the return. (First rule: "Never permit the vehicle make, fleet number or registration number to appear on the picture, so as to be no help whatsoever to future vehicle historians.")

The writer wishes it to be known that his knowledge of this device is not personal, but that the said indicator is illustrated in another advertisement (that is unsuitable for reproduction) in a similar guide. (Source: Ward Lock Guides to Oxford and Matlock)

ARP

WHEN PACKING FOR YOUR HOLIDAYS

be prepared for emergencies and put a packet of

"TOINOCO SILKY FIBRE" PAPER HANDKERCHES.

in your case or haversack. THE ORIGINAL AND SOFTEST, they take up little space, are pleasing as silk, and, after use, destroyed like paper.

At Chemists and Stores in Sealed Cartons of 50, 2/-, also "Toinoco Papier Crepon" 50 for 1/9, "Toinoco Velveta" 50 for 10d., or from

Dept. H.G., The Toinoco Handkerchief Co., Ltd., 55, Hatton Garden, E.C.1.

AS USED BY ROYALTY.

ROGERS' MUSCATOL

Cure and prevention from bites of

MIDGES, GNATS, MOSQUITOES
Liquid and Solid, 2/-

From High-class Chemists, or

FRANK A. ROGERS, Sole Manufacturer,
1, BEAUMONT STREET, LONDON, W.1.

DEAN & DAWSON LTD.

Travel Organisers.

For Steamship Passages, Independent
or Escorted Tours on the Continent,
Great Britain and Ireland, apply

7, BLANDFORD SQUARE
N.W. 1.

81, PICCADILLY, W.1.

87, GRACECHURCH STREET, E.C.3.

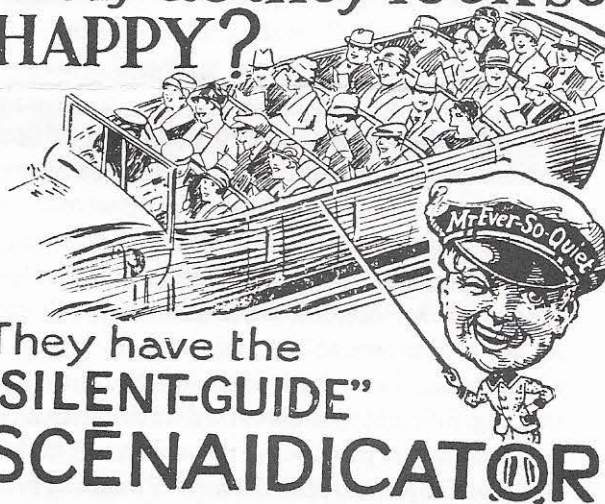
26, ALDERSGATE STREET, E.C.1.

IMPERIAL HOTEL, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1

And Branches.

ii

Why do they look so HAPPY?



They have the
"SILENT-GUIDE"
SCENAIDICATOR

Indicating:—

What there is to see,
When and where to see it,
What there is to know,
On Coach Tours as they go.

THE MORAL thus is plain to see,
IF YOU would also happy be:—

TAKE THE COACH WITH THE
SCENAIDICATOR

Supplied by SILENT-GUIDE TOURS LTD., for the enjoyment of those who travel by Motor Coach in every Tourist Centre in Britain.

iii

COSTS

in the early days of the MOTOR BUS

During the heyday of the tramcar, did the new fangled motorbus offer a sensible alternative to electric traction on a fixed track? In the first of two articles we look at pioneering Eastbourne, the first municipality to reject the tram and opt for the as yet unproved form of public transport which did not require an expensive infrastructure.

Part One - General Considerations

At the turn of the present century, the electric tram was spreading rapidly onto the streets of most cities in Europe. When tramcars first appeared, they were far superior to the existing vehicles on the streets, particularly in respect of speed, smoothness, brake performance, ability to surmount gradients, and the standard of illumination inside and out. So good was the technology, that it was not until the thirties that it became necessary to improve it. The outstanding proof of this is the Bristol tramway network, which for special reasons remained unaltered until it was abandoned in the early forties.

Apart from the need to provide fixed tracks and a means of current collection, the disadvantages of the tram were few. One cause for concern in a few 'posh' seaside towns and London was the need for 'unsightly' overhead wires, resulting in the adoption of very much more costly and inefficient systems of supplying current to the cars than overhead live wires. No-one in the early days accused the tramcar of being 'inflexible', and its fixed tracks were seen as an advantage in penetrating narrow streets and tight corners. The need to pave the area of roadway around tram tracks placed a cost upon tramway construction in Britain for private companies which was not a cause for concern amongst municipal operators who were responsible for road maintenance anyway. It allowed for some street paving to be paid for from tramway revenue rather than rate revenue. The ownership of tramway tracks and the question of who paid for repairs and renewals is a complex one, and is closely involved with the abandonment of tramways in some places.

So what were the advantages of the motorbus in 1903? Eastbourne chose buses partly on aesthetic grounds (no wires) but then had to face up to the three great problems of bad road surfaces, poor tyres and unreliable mechanical parts (engines, clutches, transmissions). The following summary of the early years of Eastbourne's motorbuses is taken from the

Journal of the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society, Issue 26, 1996. It is of interest to quote the source. In the archives held in the library of Seeboard's Milne Electrical collection, at Amberley Museum, is the leather bound Electrical Engineer's Report Book for Eastbourne Corporation's Electric Light Committee. When motor buses were first introduced to Eastbourne, the town's electrical engineer, John Kempe Brydges, was put in charge of the undertaking. It was not unusual for municipal motor buses to be placed in the charge of men who knew little about them, for motorised transport was in its infancy. It was often the tramways manager who was given the task of running buses, but in a town without trams like Eastbourne, and as early as 1903, it fell to the electrical engineer. One should remember that in these early days, operators relied very much upon the vehicle manufacturers to provide back-up servicing, and to train the drivers and mechanics.

Part Two - Setting up the System at Eastbourne

The early entries for 1903 show that Brydges was very much in the dark as to what he was expected to do. Much of his fortnightly reports on the buses are in the form of questions to his Committee, and it is only gradually that we see him taking the initiative. On 28th April 1903, he asks for instructions on the following issues:

- a) Whether the trial Milnes-Daimler bus should continue to run as at present.
- b) Whether it should keep to the same route.
- c) The appointment of a driver?
- d) The licensing of the conductor?
- e) The cleaning of the bus?
- f) The purchase of petrol?
- g) Storage and licence to keep petrol?
- h) The stabling of the car?

His next report was mainly taken up with reporting details of a stone-throwing incident, and the apprehension of the boys concerned. However, he also states that a second bus was due at the end of May, and asks for instructions as to where it should be "stabled" (note the continued use of horse-era terminology), on what route it should be operated, what fares should be charged and how a crew should be recruited. The second bus was duly delivered, and the next report in early June was almost entirely concerned with matters mechanical.

No. 1 Bus, a Milnes Daimler, was taken off the Meads route on 1/6/03, to be replaced by No. 2 Bus, which had arrived for service on Whit Monday. It ran that day on the Hampden Park route, making £8 and 5 (old) pence over 15 journeys. No. 1 Bus now required attention to tyres and gears, and it was decided that both Nos. 1 & 2 should have the front entrance substituted by a rear entrance. This would

allow for an increased seating capacity (by two) and be similar to the entrance and step arrangements seen on a bus of Durkopp make that had been on trial

By 23rd June, a two bus service had been established over two routes, Seaside - Upperton and Meads. Both vehicles were working satisfactorily, with only 8 trips reported as "lost", and one minor collision. Mr. Brydges was now warming to his task, seizing the opportunity to operate an extra last journey on the Upperton route and earning an average of 6/- extra revenue by so doing. The warm weather in July saw the decision to remove the roof on No. 2, but this was thought not to "look well", so the next day the roof was replaced, but all the windows were taken out. This was seen as the best way of running the vehicle, although some of the front windows were replaced a few days later "so that we now have a combination of open and closed vehicle". Rainproof curtains were ordered to close if it rained, as the windows, which were fixed by screws, could not be replaced whilst a bus was in service. The vehicles ran between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. By now a "Head Driver and Fitter" had been appointed. His duties were to attend at the yard two hours before the service commenced to prepare the vehicles, and to take over from the regular drivers at meal breaks. A "Head Conductor" attended the same hours, and assisted the Head Driver, who was also paid overtime for heavy repairs done on Sundays.

At this point (11th July 1903) there is an entry as follows:

"The Surveyer has applied on behalf of Gardner, the Engineer of the Air Compressing Station, requesting a free pass on the Motor buses from Roselands as far as the Leaf Hall. I presume that if this is given there will be other similar applications." The question of free travel "for corporation servants on corporation business" is one that was raised at many tramway committee meetings around the country, with varying degrees of compliance. It is ironic that when the electrical Engineer ceased to be in charge of the Eastbourne motor buses, free passes were withdrawn from the use of some employees of the electricity department.

(Does anyone know what the purpose of the Compressed Air Station was?)

Late in July a visit was made to Clarksons Ltd. at Chelmsford, to inspect the construction of steam omnibuses. A demonstrator had visited Eastbourne, and 9 frames (chassis) were seen at the factory, of which 6 were for lorries and 3 omnibuses for Torquay. A complete 14 seat bus cost £648, or a char a bang (sic) would cost £582. Much interest was paid to the tyres fitted, as those on the Milnes-Daimler rear wheels were running only an average of 1600 miles

before needing replacement at £42. A spare set of wheels was now being kept to hand to reduce what would nowadays be called down time.

By August down time was becoming more of a problem. No. 1 Bus was running on second-hand tyres, one of which was on loan. The term used when a tyre became unserviceable was "collapsed". When a tyre on No. 2 bus collapsed, and some new tyres on order were not delivered, one route had to be suspended, and telegrams were sent to Milnes-Daimler asking if any further wheels with second hand tyres were available. The situation was not resolved until a third vehicle was delivered.

The services had now become well enough established for stopping places to be designated. At first white bands were painted around the arc-lamp posts, but in mid-September plates were on order to be attached above these bands. The Committee were set to visit a new route (Tally Ho) to authorise the stopping places, but Mr. Brydges now felt sufficiently confident in his job to recommend the locations. By now he had also taken the initiative to appoint his Chief Clerk to extra duties supervising the bus operations, and asked the Committee to "recognise the additional time" worked by this man.

The next problem to be faced was that of excess wear on the gears of the Milnes-Daimlers. The replacement price charged by the manufacturers was deemed excessive, and after making enquiries, new gears were cut by outside firms at considerably less cost. Tyre problems continued into November, with various makes and configurations being tried and (mostly) failing. Clarksons wrote to tell of the success of their first omnibus in Torquay, and they also submitted a plan of a double decker...the result of this being an order placed for delivery of a steam bus the following year. New buses were also ordered from Milnes-Daimler.

By April 1904 the motor bus operation was one year old. Calls were made for the construction of a proper Motor Bus Shed, and it was decided that a start should be made on repainting and varnishing the fleet, starting with No. 1. However, Mr. Brydges' role was now nearing an end, as the Motor Bus Department became independent of the Electricity Department, and as a result, three free bus passes were withdrawn. Mr. Brydges did not lament the loss of his own personal pass, as he used the buses very little, but made the point that the withdrawal of the passes was unfortunate, as it gave scant recognition to the help given to the infant motor bus operation by the Electricity Department, help which was still being called for on occasions. During 1905, "revenge" was exacted when the electricity Department insisted upon some remuneration for shared facilities (some

machinery, staff toilets, telephone etc.) The new Bus Shed was opened on 13th March 1905, on a site that was adjacent to the Electricity Works, and there was another opportunity for friction between the two departments. However, it should be noted that Mr. Brydges was called upon again, briefly, to oversee the bus department in the interim between the departure of the Bus Engineer, Mr. Griffiths (who had taken over in 1904), and the arrival of the General Manager, Mr. Ellison, in 1906.

Part 3 - Conclusions

The record given in the Electricity Department's ledger is far from complete in regard to the buses. It is clear that once an operating procedure had been established, much of the day to day work was done by the Chief Clerk. There are even orders placed for buses in the period in question which are not recorded, but which must have been noted in the Account Book of the motor bus undertaking.

What can be seen, however, is the difficulty with wheels and tyres. It is not just a question of tyres which wore out, but also a question of finding the most suitable type of tyre to fit. Front and rear wheels in the early days were of different sizes (in a way, a bus was like a tramway maximum traction bogie), and rear wheels, although reduced in size from the dimensions used on horse buses, were larger and were double. Mr. Brydges, at one point, complains of the damage done to the buses on "crossings". These are not railway level crossings, but the intersections of main roads, where the central section of roadway carried traffic from both directions and was also affected by scuffing of turning vehicles. It is very clear that buses damaged roadways and roadways damaged buses.

The next most pressing difficulty was that of mechanical failure, and the lack of knowledge as to how long the various parts would last. At first there were no stocks of spares, nor even a provision of a spare vehicle. The timetables seem to have been drawn up on the "as buses are available" basis. The complaint over the Milnes-Daimler spare parts was countered by the provision of locally made parts. This shows the importance of having an engineer in charge, rather than an accountant. Many buses at the time, as were tyres, were of foreign manufacture, and this was one reason for the expense. Buses, on a seat for seat basis, were very much more expensive than tramcars, and far less durable, in part because of the engineering, in part because of the damage they suffered from the bad roads and the dust.

It will be noted elsewhere in this issue that the GWR, starting with buses at the same time as Eastbourne, employed drivers with mechanical knowledge. This was also true at Eastbourne, who like the

GWR supplied the drivers with leather uniforms, and expected the same men to turn out for heavy maintenance duties. When Eastbourne started, the only facilities provided for the buses was a shed....as again provided by the GWR at its various road motor out-stations.

Records were kept of the mileage run by each of the Eastbourne buses. This was not just to work out the "pence per car mile", but to keep a close watch on the tyres and fuel and oil consumption. The tyre performance was critical, because much more money was spent on tyres and wheelwrights fees than any other item. It is clear that there was soon built up a stock of replacement wheels, and this needed a tyre record to be kept "per wheel" rather than "per bus". Manufacturers of both tyres and whole vehicles seem to have traded in "second hand wheels", and the tyre industry was awash of novelty designs and special offers. A bus would often have different types of tyres on the front axle from the rear axle, and it even seems there was even cases of changing the wheel diameter to suit local requirements or the engineer's whims.

Many of the problems faced in 1903 were not resolved for about ten years. Only when the London companies settled to the task of developing a good reliable bus, and were able to spread the cost of development over large orders for production models, did the art of running motor buses become easier.

Early Eastbourne Buses

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Milnes-Daimler | new 4/03 |
| 2 | Milnes-Daimler | new 6/03 |
| 3 | Milnes-Daimler | new 8/03 |
| 4 | Milnes-Daimler | new 9/03 |
| 5 | Clarkson (steam) | new 4/04 |
| 6 | Milnes-Daimler (double decker) | new 3/04 |
| 7 | Clarkson (steam) | new 5/04 |
| 8 | Milnes-Daimler (double decker) | new 12/04 |
| 9 | Milnes-Daimler (double decker) | new 1/05 |
| 10 | Milnes-Daimler (double decker) | new 12/05 |

The above were followed by more Milnes-Daimler, then some De Dion purchased from London, and finally a long association with Leyland Motor commenced in 1912. One bus, No. 9, received a "top cover" in 11/05, but this was not approved. The next Newsletter will contain part two of this article, and show the costs involved in setting up the first fleet of top-covered double deckers at Widnes in 1909.