
ROADS & ROAD TRANSPORT HISTORY CONFERENCE

NEWSLETTER no. 6 August 1994

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CONFERENCE NEWS

Next Meeting at Coventry

With the attendance of a growing number of associate members at our twice-yearly business meetings, they have begun to change in character. It has therefore been decided to formalise this change by splitting the meeting into two parts.

The morning session of the next meeting, which will be held at the Museum of British Road Transport, Coventry on Saturday 24 September, commencing at 11.00, will be devoted to business matters.

After a break for lunch, which will provide an opportunity for members to get to know

each other better, the meeting will re-gather from 14.00 to 16.00 for a series of short presentations and discussion on aspects of members' research. Five or six papers of about 15 minutes duration have been offered. It promises to be both interesting and a useful opportunity to pick up information and ideas that could help us with our own particular studies. All associate members and individual members of our corporate members are invited.

1995 Symposium at Beaulieu

Ideas are being developed for the next biennial symposium, on the theme of the Road Passenger Transport Industry, to be held at the National Motor Museum in the Autumn of 1995.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome another corporate member, the M. & D. and East Kent Bus Club, whose 'potted biography' was printed in Newsletter no. 5.

Welcome also to the following new associate members (their declared special interests are shown in brackets):

Richard J. Buckley, The Vicarage, Church Drive, Wentworth, Rotherham S62 7TW. [Tramways, with particular reference to their economic history.]

John Ellis, 52 Trinity View, Ketley Bank, Telford, Shropshire TF2 0DY. [Road passenger transport.]

David M. Holding, 6 The Dene, Chester Moor, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH2

3TB. [History of the bus industry, particularly in Wales, East Anglia and the North-East.]

Derek M. Jones, Flat 1, 7 Second Avenue, Hove, East Sussex BN3 2LH. [History of buses, operators and services in Kent and East Sussex; the coachbuilders Thomas Harrington Ltd.]

A. M. T. Pomeroy, 182 Kings Hall Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1LJ

Graham Reeve, 72 Tagwell Road, Droitwich Spa, Worcs WR9 7AQ

Malcolm Wright, 1 Polhill Drive, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 9PN. [Bibliography of 20th century British road transport -- see Newsletter no.2 -- and a part-time publisher under the name of Roadmaster Publishing -- see page 14.]

Change of address

Arthur Ingram, 11a Pound Road, Chatteris, Cambs PE16 6RL

Stephen Laing, 31 Leicester Street, Leamington Spa, Warks CV32 4TD.

Apologies for the error in transcribing Roger Cragg's address in the last issue. It should have read: 8 Claverdon Road, Mount Nod, Coventry CV5 7HP.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Mr J. H. Price seeks further information on Joseph Wright, who in 1845 founded what was later to become the Metropolitan Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. at Saltley — particularly on his previous trading activities in London, building stage coaches and some of the first carriages for the London & Birmingham and London & Southampton Railways. Replies via Roger Atkinson please.

CORRESPONDENCE

Road Transport History Records at the Public Records Office

The excellent article by Tony Newman in Newsletter No. 4 needs amplification. Case 'K' in the 'Reference Room' at the PRO contains a card index compiled by the former British Transport Historical Records staff. In it there are some 54 cards under the Road Transport heading and by using the little black books above it is possible to translate the old references into the present ones in the RAIL collection.

Road transport collections in the RAIL series include Carter Patterson (RAIL 1130), Hays Wharf Cartage (RAIL 1131), and Pickfords (RAIL 1133). In addition RAIL 1114 contains Reports & Accounts for both bus and road transport operators. Classes AN 54 to 68 cover firms that were nationalised, together with minutes of the Road Haulage Executive.

The Company Register indexes are to be found in Case 'G' for the period 1856 onwards.

H. J. Compton (R&CHS)

Science Museum Library acquires the CIT Collection of Bound Pamphlets

The Chartered Institute of Transport, constrained by limitations on library space, has recently donated its collection of bound pamphlets to the National Museum of Science and Industry (better known as the Science Museum) at South Kensington. The Science Museum Library is open from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm from Monday to Saturday, extended to 9.00 pm (except Saturdays) during term-time at Imperial College.

John Hibbs

**AN IMPORTANT NEW RESOURCE:
THE OMNIBUS SOCIETY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE**

The Omnibus society is the senior UK 'enthusiast' organisation concerned with the bus and coach industry. Since its formation in 1929 it has consistently gained the respect of managers in the industry itself, and has attracted a membership with a wide range of interests. Through specialist papers as well as its journal, the *Omnibus Magazine*, it has contributed greatly to the better understanding of the industry, with standards of accuracy and insight which would be a credit for any academic organisation.

While the Society has never limited itself to historical study and record-keeping — two aspects of its work which nonetheless command respect — its publications on various contemporaneous issues themselves form a collection of documents of great value for historians. It is therefore very satisfactory to record that the Society's Library and Archive has now been established at the Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale, in the Ironbridge Gorge museum complex. With the exception of London Transport and the London area, material there covers the United Kingdom (with some items from overseas) and may be classified as follows:

1. The Memorial Library, with texts relating to all aspects of the industry.
2. Largely unbroken sets of Notices & Proceedings for all Traffic Areas.
3. A comprehensive collection of timetables for all types of operator, ranging from 1917 to ongoing acquisitions.

4. Reference books including runs of annual publications.
5. Fleet information including OS/PSV Circle Fleet Histories.
6. Omnibus Society publications including those from the Branches.
7. Periodicals relating to the industry, including some complete runs.
8. A wide selection of bus operators' maps.

Non-members as well as members of the Society may use the Library and Archives at Coalbrookdale. (The London material is not at present accessible, awaiting the availability of satisfactory premises). Non-members are asked to pay a 'consultation fee' of £5, which should normally provide access for a period of three months, after which a further fee would be payable.

It is essential that all users make prior arrangement with the Society's Honorary Librarian, Mr. A. W. Mills, by writing to him at 4 Connaught Close, Walsall WS5 3PR, or by telephone (0922 31867). It would help if items to be consulted could be notified in advance.

Normal opening hours are from 9.30 am to 4.00 pm on Fridays. There is ample car parking, and bus services from Wolverhampton, Wellington and Telford Town Centre pass the Museum of Iron.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN BUS TERMINALS: DONCASTER'S EXPERIENCE

by P. L. Scowcroft

During the coaching age, inns were almost always the points at which one could join a stage coach. The main coaching inns in Doncaster were the *Reindeer*, the *Old and New Angel*, the *Black Boy* and the *Red Lion*, of which only the latter still survives. Many early horse-bus services, too, ran from inns, the *New Angel* being the terminal for the temporary bus which linked the town to the GNR railhead at Stockbridge [Arksey] in summer 1848 until the railway reached Doncaster that September. A bus service linking Doncaster with the steam packet boats at Thorne in the late 1850s and a Saturday service to and from Epworth in 1860 both had the (still existing, if altered) *White Bear* in Hallgate as their Doncaster terminal. Even as late as the 1920s the *Salutation* Hotel in South Parade was briefly the point of departure for charabanc excursions and other similar tours were operated from sundry cafes in nearby Waterdale.

But from the late 19th century other terminals came into use. The local grocery emporium, Hodgson & Hepworth, ran from 1889 horse-buses serving several Doncaster suburbs at a penny fare and these naturally terminated outside Hodgson's central premises in St Sepulchre Gate. These no longer exist and Corporation trams drove Hodgson's buses off the road within weeks of the former appearing in 1902; but several in-town Doncaster bus services still terminate in St Sepulchre Gate (though the emerging Doncaster Unitary Development Plan envisages the cessation of this practice) or in nearby Duke Street and Cleveland

Street. From around 1890 Steadman & Sons' horse-buses to Avenue Road and Hyde Park had their terminus just round the corner from Hodgson's in Station Road, a street not laid out until 1882. Steadman's horse-buses likewise ceased to run soon after the trams appeared, but the trams themselves and the later trolleybuses and buses operated from roughly the same point.

Doncaster has never had one central bus station for all, or even most, services, traffic congestion having prevented this from being more than a town planner's ideal. When in the late 1960s the Doncaster County Borough Council built the North (adjacent to the North Bridge) and South (bordering on Waterdale) Bus Stations, the town's major bus terminals for out-of-town services were reduced to three: North, serving routes to the north and north-west; South serving routes to the south and south-west; and Christ Church, little more than 300 yards from the latter but separated by the main north-south thoroughfare through the town, which remained more or less as it had done for 40 years to serve routes to the east and north-east. Only in the last few years has Christ Church been reduced to a wayside stopping place for practically all the services which formerly operated from it and which now have a more central terminus. This development was envisaged at least as early as 1927 but traffic considerations even then mitigated against it. In 1931 the Doncaster Council, after much thought, decided to retain Christ Church, which then had 267 Saturday departures to Armthorpe, Thorne,

Stainforth, etc., against 300 for Waterdale and 214 for Frenchgate, the next largest bus terminals at that time.

Waterdale, really two terminals — a bus station sometimes called Glasgow Paddocks and with few facilities (it is now a car park) and a coach stop on the opposite side of the road — when it was replaced by the South Bus Station in 1969, had been a bus terminal since at least 1916 when H. Hancock's 28 seat charabanc arrived from Rossington and in the 1920s a few small proprietors' services terminated round the corner in South Parade (part of the Great North Road through the town at that time). By the late 1920s stage carriage routes to Rossington, Edlington, Mexborough, Sheffield, Sandall Beat (at holiday time), Finningley and later Bessacarr were all worked from Waterdale. So did many coach services, long distance ones to London, Scotland, the North-east, North-west and Midlands, and local and seaside excursions run by firms like East Midland, Yorkshire Traction, Leon Motors and the Purple Bus Company. Coach facilities exist in the South Bus Station but coaches even now pick up and set down passengers in Waterdale. The South Station's stage carriage services include those formerly operated from Glasgow Paddocks and other new ones.

The North Bus Station effectively replaced three terminals. Trafford Street (Frenchgate) was in the 1960s still used for services to Woodlands and localities nearby — again a continuation of a long tradition as Steadman & Sons' charabancs had plied to Woodlands ('Brodsworth Model Village') from Trafford Street in 1908. Services to the north of Doncaster expanded in the early 1920s; Trafford Street became inadequate, so Doncaster

Corporation laid out a bus stand at the town (south) end of the North Bridge, built over the railway and opened as recently as 1910. Approved on 7 October 1925 at an estimated cost of £4,650, the stand came into use on 3 October 1927. (As the council claimed in November 1927 it had recently spent over £7,000 on bus stands, other work had presumably been done elsewhere at that time.) The North Bridge stand was in turn outgrown by its traffic, so on 4 February 1944 a new bus station at Marshgate, on the far (north) side of the North Bridge and accommodating seven buses at a time, was opened by the Regional Transport Commissioner, Major F. S. Eastwood, basically for the longer distance services (to Leeds, Pontefract, etc.). Marshgate had been a terminus, without facilities, for a few small operators during the early 1920s.

Doncaster Central Railway Station, as against Station Road, already mentioned, has rarely been a bus terminal. In the early 1850s coaches connecting trains from Sheffield with steam packets at Thorne ran from there. In 1932 Yorkshire Traction insisted on operating its Woodlands buses to the Railway Station, felt to be more central than the North Bridge stand and the Traffic Commissioner supported them. This was a temporary development; only buses replacing temporarily discontinued train services (usually on Sundays) and the Inner Circle service have since run from the Station.

Rationalisation of bus terminals has been gradual. Marshgate and, for the most part, Christ Church are no longer termini. The Frenchgate Shopping Centre has submerged the one-time Trafford Street and Station Road termini. But it appears to be accepted that the two main bus stations will never be unified.

UNLOADING LORRIES

by Richard Storey

When a local haulier I was interviewing some years ago mentioned that he had a vehicle fitted with a moving floor for bagged cement traffic in the 1930s, I duly recorded the fact, without understanding the details. Now a recent purchase makes at least one proprietary system clear: 'The new method of loading & unloading road vehicles', a 12-page *General Purpose Body Catalogue*, issued c.1932 by C. H. Johnson & Sons Ltd., Smedley Road, Manchester. It describes and illustrates their movable floor system (patent no. 293,997), a flexible, rubber composition, moving floor (guaranteed for two years) under geared control, operated by a winding handle (apparently detachable) from either end of the vehicle. The floor was normally fitted for longitudinal operation, but could also be installed to provide an either-side-discharge body. The floor could also be fitted to trailers (an 8-ton Beardmore trailer of Burn Transit Ltd was illustrated).

Points claimed in its favour by the manufacturers included the capacity to load as well as discharge (i.e. items or material placed at the tailboard end could be wound to the cab end); the elimination of stresses and strains to the chassis created by the pivot of a tipping body; the capacity to discharge a bulk load on uneven ground or in restricted height areas (where a tipper lorry would be unstable or unable to tip to the full lifting height of the body). Additional advantages mentioned in the testimonials reproduced were speeding up of operation, permitting extra (short) journeys in a day, and the benefit of combining the function of a tipping and flat bed lorry in one vehicle.

Operators featured in photographs and testimonials included: Great Western Railway (7 vehicles, GX 3215 is illustrated); Hovis (6-wheel Leyland 'Hippo' 12-ton capacity box van GT 680); Cement Marketing Co. Ltd (Sentinel DG/GP for the transport of 12 tons of SD bricks and Leyland 'Bull', shown with a load of empty paper sacks); Northwood Haulage & Supply Co. Ltd, Rickmansworth (five repeat orders placed); Thomas J. Nicholl & Son Ltd, coal factors, Dublin (Morris Commercial 6-wheel lorry); J. H. Beattie & Co. Ltd, coal merchants, NW1 (6-wheel Ford); Wilts County Council (floor fitted to an old Thornycroft lorry); James Ashcroft, haulage contractor, Longton (Bedford forward-control conversion); Greenwood Bros., quarry owners, Glam. (3 AEC lorries, especially used for tarmacadam delivery); Birmingham Corporation Gas Dept (6-wheel Thornycroft OV 8090, fitted with what are now known as 'greedy boards' for transport of 3 tons of coke — a repeat order); W. E. Chivers & Son Ltd, Devizes (2 lorries fitted).

Railway-owned commercial vehicles (Stevens-Stratten & Aldridge, 1987) illustrates GX 3335, a larger GWR vehicle than the one featured by Johnsons, and one of seven Thornycroft 'JJ' 5-tonners, with moving floors built by the Principality Wagon Co. of Cardiff (pp. 18-19). A 1938 LMS Albion van with a Bromilow & Edwards 'Principality' moving floor is also featured (p. 52). Johnsons' catalogue was printed in Cardiff; coincidences, or did manufacturing rights change hands, Johnsons—Principality Wagon Co.—Bromilow & Edwards during the 1930s?

A LITTLE LOCAL RESEARCH: WARRINGTON CORPORATION TRAMWAYS

by Ron Phillips

In 1962 the Tramway Museum Society magazine *Trams* carried an article by Ron Brook on Warrington Corporation Tramways. The substance of this work was later incorporated into a book written by John Robinson some 25 years later, which provided a photographic record of all the types of vehicle operated by the Warrington Corporation Transport Department 1902-1988. In 1993, following a request, I began an on-going correspondence with Roy, who is preparing to re-write his original article for the *Tramway Review*, and I began some in-depth research into local archives. Subsequently, I have been asked to put on paper a record of what I have discovered to be available locally, and to describe some of the pitfalls.

Warrington has a Central Library and Museum; the Library holds minute books of all the Town Council committees. The usual first recourse of the tramway historian is the Tramways Committee minutes, but I strongly recommend perusal of the business of most other committees. In the case of Warrington, the Sanitary, Street Lighting, Paving and Sewerage, Bridges, Parks and Recreation, and Cemetery Committees' records have all revealed a host of hitherto unpublished facts concerning the tramways. Some examples are:

(a) The layout of the Cemetery terminus was changed three times, twice involving extension of the tracks.¹ The work was interconnected with road widening, de-consecration of ground, and the relocation of sanitary and waiting facilities.

(b) The layout of the Sankey Bridge terminus was changed 1911-13, involving the reconstruction of fixed and moving bridges and construction of a brick waiting room and urinals. Much is said about road traffic on this route (A57, Liverpool-Manchester-Sheffield) and a local traffic census of 1922 showed this road to be the busiest trunk road in Great Britain outside Greater London.

(c) Tram tracks were laid in one central street 5 years before authorisation to run trams therein was obtained, at the instigation of the Paving and Sewerage Committee.

Little of the above detail is to be found in the Tramway Minutes, for most resolutions recorded have no following report on the action taken, nor the timing of the action. The Large Scale Ordnance Survey Maps are of course a useful resource in connection with tram track layouts, but their evidence must be treated with caution. The information shown was correct at the date of the survey, but can easily be out of date when the maps were published. Because these maps were published at irregular intervals, quite significant intermediate changes, or changes implemented after closure of part of the network of tram lines, may never have been shown by the O.S. Crossovers may or may not be shown; in the case of Warrington, the existence of certain crossovers has only been corroborated by photographs² or reliable written records.³ The Report of the Inspecting Officer of the Board of Trade would normally be thought of as a reliable source, but even here, in the case of Warrington, there is a mystery

as yet unsolved: a written reference to a line whose actual existence is unproven by any other source.⁴

Much research into tramway matters is helped by photographic records, but can the camera lie? Or rather, can it be made to bear false witness? The answer to the latter question is YES. Both Warrington Library and Museum have good photographic archives. One picture in the Library collection is an original print of the 'one man tram' at Longford terminus; this picture, which has been widely published locally, shows a car with the driver/conductor at the controls, with money bag and ticket punch, and with a bystander and his dog standing in the roadway. But from another source came a second photograph, clearly taken on the same occasion, as the same employee, bystander and dog are still present, but the bag and ticket punch are now worn by a conductor, who is posed alongside the tram with an inspector. Could it be that on instructions from the management both staff and photographer were told to simulate a picture of a tram worked by one man?

Commercial postcards are another well used source of information for transport historians, but many bear false witness, not just those which were hand coloured at the whim of the colourist. Overhead wires were often touched out, but other things touched in. One Warrington card shows catch points touched out, but wires left intact. A second shows the wire touched out and the points left in. A third leaves in disused overhead gear, and adds a terrace of houses to block off the main A49 trunk road. On the positive side, commercial views of the town centre prove that trams terminating here after 1922 had trolleys turned by the conductors wielding a

bamboo pole, and that two almost adjacent crossovers existed for a period in Bridge Street.³ Several cards show the early enamel tram stop signs which were taken down in 1917. In this year, the Board of Trade requested a reduction in the number of stopping places, to save current. This fact is recorded in the Tramway Minutes. What is not recorded is the form of action taken: i.e. the removal of the tram stop enamel plates, and their replacement by coloured bands on traction poles. This can only be found on photographs. Tramways Committees were usually concerned with finance and left day-to-day operational matters in the hands of the management. There are very few references in the Warrington minutes to changes in the overhead line (installation of trolley reversers, a new feeder, and the removal of central standards are recorded) yet the whole of the overhead was renewed, being totally changed in form in some instances. Such work was regarded as maintenance, and was paid for out of revenue, as was minor track work. This, however, can sometimes be identified through the placing of orders for special trackwork, which was generally put out to tender. Timetable and fare changes receive little detailed mention in committee minutes, and changes to rolling stock are virtually ignored. For some details on these matters, I found two sources at the Library, both of which require much investment of one's time.

The existing Warrington local newspaper, the *Warrington Guardian*, publishes a Year Book; included in the editions for 1902-35 are details of tramway times and fares. Here can be found all the details of the transfer system, the 'penny stages', the 'cross-town' stages, and the necessary clues to the number of cars needed to work

each route. A second resource is the texts of both the *Guardian* and the *Examiner* (a paper which closed down c.1960) of which the Library has a complete collection on microfilm. In the columns of both papers there is a wealth of detail on the road transport history of the town, and this does not just lie in the reports of key events. Here are a few examples:

(a) Accident reports. These include accidents involving trams or other road vehicles and give much information on the nature of urban traffic in past times: speeds, road surfaces, and other matters. One particular accident reveals confusion on the law which stated that a tram could be overtaken on either side; this only applied to a tramcar travelling in the same direction as the overtaking vehicle.

(b) Traffic congestion. Warrington, situated at the crossing of major north-south and east-west routes, is and was a congested place, and there is much in the papers about this problem.

(c) Illuminated cars. Warrington ran such cars on six occasions. Whilst the details given are interesting from the tramway point of view, there is much social history tied up in their story too. In 1902 an illuminated car was involved in a collision (the first such event to take place?). The report of this event reveals that the car was in the hands of an unqualified driver when it struck an allegedly unlit cart owned by a prominent Warrington businessman. The case reached the courts but was then dismissed.

(d) Inauguration and closure of the tramways. The opening and closing reports are the first recourse of the researcher, but do not ignore what lies in between. The papers of 1902 and 1905 chronicle the

numerous experiments and failures conducted before the lines were opened. In 1902 there was a sense of joy at the new fast and efficient machines, and on the first Sunday the town was thronged with crowds wishing to ride. In 1935 there was no general feeling of 'good riddance', for the tramways had been well maintained and the sentiments were those of farewell to a respected servant. In the intervening years, the tramways had their critics and champions whose words appear in the newspapers, and the historian can gather much information from the complaints of disgruntled passengers and the reports by the Chairman of the Tramways Committee.

(e) What might have been. Some would argue that speculations are not valid evidence, but there is much to be learned from proposals and plans that were never turned into fact. Why did they not become fact? What did others think of such plans at the time? Did such thoughts prevail when other things came to fruition? In the 1870s and early 1880s private companies proposed horse tramways for Warrington. These were opposed by the Council, who were against the idea of others making a profit from citizens of the town. This view was re-affirmed when the Corporation began to run the electric tramways. There was a considerable profit made which went to the relief of the rates. The view is still held today; the municipal bus company has not been offered for sale by the current council.

Other proposals for tramways to link those of Warrington with Northwich, Lowton St Mary's and Knutsford all came to nothing, but the enquiries and the discussions of the time all have something to say about the background in which the actual tramways operated. Other 'might-have-beens' were

the proposals to carry refuse, sewage and coal over the tramways of the town.

The archives at the Library and Museum are a rich mine of material, but have little to tell on the subject of rolling stock. The cars were rebuilt in various ways over a period of 30 years, but precise data is hard to find. A visit to St Helens to inspect the hulk of car 2 proved worthwhile, and a new fact emerged with regard to the seating capacity of the cars which were given new top covers in the 1920s. It is difficult to find people who remember the trams accurately, but conversations with older people from Warrington have brought to light some useful material. A casual conversation produced a photo of the 1935 illuminated car. I arranged an interview with a man who had worked on the Stockton Heath swing bridge and learned much of the operating procedure on the bridge in the days when the Manchester Ship Canal was busy. The details on various old photographs have been discussed with older people and new facts have emerged in this way. As such facts emerge, I have sought to corroborate them in at least one other way. As for photographs, I have found various ways of putting a date to them. Theatre hoardings provide an excellent way of dating pictures to the week, but there are more subtle clues too: the type of ticket punch or uniform worn by the staff, whether the street lighting is gas or electric, the position of the stopping places, the presence of other vehicles whose date of first registration may be traced.

The Warrington tramways, with 5 routes and 27 cars, were small enough to be documented in detail, but after one year I am far from finished. The story of the tramways cannot be isolated from other road transport history and I feel it is wrong

of some historians to ignore the early motor bus. It posed no real threat to well managed tramways and complemented many networks. What killed off tramways was the arrival of the pneumatically tyred low-loading bus, tarmacadam road surfaces and the improvements in roads forced by the increasing traffic volume in the 1930s.

Notes:

1. Tramways could be extended without special acts, as the existing Act of Parliament made provision for sidings, crossovers, and other such works to be built 'if necessary for the efficient running of the system'. The three changes at the Cemetery extended the line to prevent waiting cars from obstructing a junction, to extend the line clear of the junction, and to realign and extend the line to reach a new waiting room.
2. A commercial postcard of the mid-twenties shows the contemporaneous existence of two crossovers about 50 yards apart in Bridge Street. In view of the classic economy of the WCT, this has to be seen to be believed.
3. There is no known photograph of the York Street crossover on Knutsford Road, but it is referred to at the time of the BoT Inspection in 1902, again in 1915 when a ceremonial car is known to have turned there, and again within weeks of the final abandonment in 1935, when cars were scheduled to turn there on Walking Day on the first Friday in July.
4. There is much evidence to show that 'Tramway 10a' (curves between Lathford and Wilderspool routes) did not exist. Numerous photos at its alleged location show no sign of it, the documented itineraries of the illuminated cars make no use of it and, above all, had it existed, then

Warrington trams could have been turned, yet all the photos show them facing the same way. Yet it was mentioned in the BoT inspection report and again in BoT

rules of 1915, by which time photographs and subsequent recorded track changes show that it was not there. Perhaps it was authorised for ghost trams only.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON QUALITY

by John Hibbs

In the October/November 1993 number of that excellent journal, the *Omnibus Magazine*, T. A. Dalton records his experiences of seaside bus work before the Great British Holiday migrated to the Costa Too Much. Thinking about his remarks on working hours and the absence of rest days (' ... if the provisions of the Road Traffic Act ever came to mind, they would be regarded as interesting but irrelevant'), I recalled my own experience as manager of Corona Coaches in the 1950s.

'Daily Orders' were the kingpin of the day's work for me. The typed orders had to go to the conductor of the 5pm bus from Sudbury, to be pinned up in the running shed at the depot at Acton. The minimum time it took to sort out drivers and vehicles was three quarters of an hour, and at busy seasons I would prepare a rough draft a week in advance. It was a concentrated task — I gave up smoking when one afternoon I regarded the ashtray full of dog-ends, and realised I had no memory of having smoked any of them.

We had set duties, which were tailored to the legal limits on drivers' hours, but at busy times it was a case of cut-and-match. You put parts of two duties together, to free up a coach for a London relief or an afternoon tour. (The fleet was almost entirely made up of coaches). And then you paid no more than passing recognition

to drivers' hours! As to rest days, when Whitsun came in the first year we were running the business, the shop steward came up to me in the yard and said 'Us younger chaps don't expect any rest days for the summer — it's our harvest'. Obviously I made the duties equitable, so that a man was not on late one day and early the next, but the reason was clear — this was the alternative to standing men off for the winter.

But there was more to it. I knew, and the Ministry's Vehicle Examiner knew that I knew, that we were subject to stricter examinations and recertifications than most of our small competitors. After all, our mileage was heavier, and our vehicles were in and out of Kings Cross Coach Station every day of the year. But even here, there could be give or take. On one occasion the Certifying Officer, having climbed all over a bus (CLA 103, Leyland LT7, ECW body, ex Longs, ex Birch Brothers — and heaven knows who before that), said 'I'll give it six months, but don't ask me to certify it again'. A nod which was as good as a wink!

Easier days than now, I am sure. And traffic was light enough. But something has been lost — trust, perhaps. And I doubt whether regulations are better when they are enforced heavily-handedly. But as for drivers' hours — who today could explain the regulations at all!

'CAROON, CARROON, CAROOME (ORIGIN UNKNOWN)'

At a recent meeting of the Committee (writes our chairman, Professor Hibbs) I remarked upon a notice which I recall having seen at the Worshipful Company of Carmen's premises, which must have been removed from public display somewhere for preservation. It referred to the number of vehicles permitted to stand somewhere in the City of London, and included a reference to 'Cars and Carrooms'.

Having long puzzled as to what a 'Caroom' could be, I asked if anyone present had heard of it. Since then our fellow-member Tony Newman has enlightened me, and I thought a copy of his letter would interest readers of the *Newsletter*. Having started by giving me a reference to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Tony wrote a second time, as follows:

Further to my note to you last week, I was in London on Wednesday to give my talk on Gas Buses to the Friends of the London Transport Museum. I had an hour to spare and called in at the Guildhall Library. Here I had the good fortune to find a member of staff who really knew where to look for reliable information on the subject of carts in the City. Consequently I emerged having resolved, at least to my satisfaction, the question which you raised. I hope that you will also find these details settle the matter.

First I looked at the full O.E.D.; here the authors have gone into fanciful conjecture about a link with the Old French word Carron and a tax on carts being levied to defray the cost of paving. They also quote examples of the words Carroon and Caroome being used to mean 'a rent', 'a privileged cart' and 'a licence to keep a cart'.

Then I was shown a book, The Worship Company of Carmen of London; a short history, by Eric Bennett, published in 1952, with a revised edition in 1961. At page 17 the author states:

Mr Joseph Maberley, solicitor to Christ's Hospital commented on the 1835 Act of Common Council, concerning carrooms: 'Hitherto we have considered the privilege of claiming a licence to work a cart for hire to be a right ... recognised under the name of a carroom. We have considered the terms Cart and Carroom to have perfectly distinct signification ... I observe that this distinction is not kept in view by the Act. A carroom is throughout treated as a word synonymous with car or cart.'

At page 166 he goes on:

In pursuance of the ancient right of Carmen to stand carts and ply for hire on certain licensed 'car-rooms' in the City, on the morning of the October Court meeting in 1956 at Tallow Chandlers' Hall Liveryman T. C. Jacobs arranged to have one of his firm's 'marked' vehicles standing and plying for hire at a licensed stand on the east side of Dowgate Hill. This City event has since received television and press notice as an annual hiring commemorating the heyday of the carmen's calling.

Finally I was shown a large volume Municipal Corporations England and Wales - 2nd Report 1837 - London & Southwark and London Companies. At page 343, referring to the Carmen's Company, it records:

It was further enacted [by the Court of Common Council] that no more than 420 cars should be permitted to work within the City and that 17s 4d should be paid per annum for a car-room and 20s upon any admittance or alienation of a car-room. The car-room appears to have been the standing room, or place where the car plied; but it is now considered as a franchise of mixed character composed of a proprietary right and an operative right. The latter can never be transferred to anyone other than a freemen of the fellowship [i.e. the Carmen's Company].

All of which shows how words can be misused, even to the extent of being given force of law with a meaning misapplied. As for the O.E.D., I think the editors should read Eric Bennett's work or apply to the Company of Carmen before publishing their next edition.

Incidentally, there is a wealth of information in Eric Bennett's book which would be useful to anyone working on the history of road transport for goods. Unfortunately it lacks an index but it is not a huge book.

I find this a most interesting term, ambiguous as to whether it means a place or a vehicle — or, indeed, both. It would be interesting to know of any similar usages. The 'Shorter Oxford' reference is as follows: *Caroon, carroon, caroume. 1720 (Origin unknown). A licence by the Lord Mayor of London to keep a cart (Wharton). 1832. Tony comments that the reference to Wharton appears to be J. S. Wharton, A Law Lexicon, 1848, 5th edn 1872. My comment is to commend such a good example of the kind of scholarship which the Conference was set up to encourage.*

THE WET SUMMER OF 1903

by Ron Phillips

The *Municipal Journal* of 24 September 1993 was a special edition to celebrate the centenary of that publication. Articles from past numbers were reprinted to represent various topics, some pertinent to modern issues, and others strangely quirky when they are considered today.

In the latter category is the article entitled 'Trams Accused of Causing Downpours' of August 1903, in which is set out the idea that the powerful and interfering currents of the electric tramway systems were responsible for the unaccustomed wet summer of 1903. It is probably safe to say (with hindsight) that the bad weather was not caused by trams, but it is interesting to note that the effect of this bad weather was to hasten the invention and introduction of top-covers on open-top tramcars.

Inclement weather caused severe overcrowding in lower saloons, and the loss of a smokers-only area on the car (remember that many of the existing single deck cars and many early single deck buses had smoking compartments). The problems of the summer of 1903 may well have channelled the thoughts of many tramway committees that the extra expense of top covers would pay in the long run, allowing the efficient use of the capacity of double deckers at all times, as well as satisfying the needs of smokers.

Seaside towns were less affected by overcrowding on wet days, as rain kept away the trippers, and the fitting of top covers would not in itself increase the influx of visitors. Here it was the pleasant experience of riding in the open air on fine days which was likely to fill the cars.

BOOK NEWS

Gloucestershire Transport

Colin Martin's *An enthusiasts' guide to Gloucestershire's independent bus & coach operators* is an enterprising private venture, now in its sixth year. Of interest to the transport historian is the inclusion of a brief historical synopsis before each fleet list, which takes the information back in at least one case to 1880. Previous owners of the many second-hand vehicles are not given, but one can't expect everything in a 32 page booklet for £2.00 plus postage, which is well illustrated into the bargain. Obtainable from C. F. Martin, 4 Willcox Drive, Woodmancote, Cheltenham GL52 4PW. The issues for 1990-1993 are also available at only £1.00 each.

It was interesting to read Colin Martin's *Guide* in the context of *I remember — travel and transport in Gloucestershire villages 1850-1950* (Gloucestershire Community Council, undated, 28pp, illus.), which I came across recently in the secondhand trade. Particularly noticeable was the late persistence of donkey pannier transport in the hilly areas of the county. The booklet closes with a vivid image of rural workers, travelling to work in town in special workers' buses and 'returning home at night like rooks to roost'.

RS

Roadmaster Publishing: New and Forthcoming Titles

John Hibbs, *Glossary of economic and related terms* (for the use of students on transport courses), 48pp, A5, £4.95.

Roy Lee, *The Blue Motors remembered*. (The story of the Porlock and Porlock Weir buses of the south-west which ran until the 1950s.). Over 60 photos, hardback. £10.95.

Barry M. Jones, *John Dengate: the village bus remembered*. (History of this Sussex independent operator.) 112pp, over 150 photos, hardback. £16.95.

Peter Gascoine, *The London RLH remembered: a history of the AEC Regent III model*. (Complete history of the low height double-deckers operated by London Transport and London Country, 1950-71.) Hardback. £12.95.

Obtainable from the publisher at PO Box 176, Chatham, Kent ME5 9AQ.

Some Recent Books

Derek Sprake, *Put out the flag: the story of Isle of Wight carriers 1860-1960*. pp.[13], 128. 55 illus. £7.95, plus £0.63 postage. Obtainable from the author, Springfield, Town Lane, Chale Green, Ventnor, I.O.W. PO38 2JS.

The few previous accounts of country carriers have generally been fairly academic studies. This is a more personal and lively story, based on the activities of the author's father and grandfather, who were carriers for nearly 70 years, and upon the memories of those who provided and used the Island's carrier services.

D. J. Smith, *Discovering horse-drawn vehicles*. Shire Publications, 1994. 176 pp. 83 photos, 117 drawings. £4.99.

This is a revised and extended edition, originally published in two separate volumes: *Discovering horse-drawn carriages* and *Discovering horse-drawn commercial vehicles*. Without doubt the most comprehensive and useful book on the subject.

GAB