

Newsletter

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This Great Northern Railway (Ireland) bus features this month as an illustration fitting two entirely different topics. The picture appeared in an article on "Transport Co-ordination in Ireland" in the July 1934 issue of "The Omnibus Magazine", (a source we gratefully acknowledge). Road transport developments in Ireland in from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s are the subject of short article later in this issue.

Also, the bus depicts the contrast between the access offered to the passenger in 1929 and that provided by the easy-access, buggy-friendly, low-floor buses of today. It is acknowledged that the open platform of most double-deckers of fifty, sixty and seventy years ago was always easy-access, — hence the (frequently ignored) warnings against alighting from a moving bus (or tram). But this Leyland Lion for the Dublin – Drogheda – Dundalk

service was not a double-decker; it was quite a different beast, placed on a moderately long-distance commuter/shopper service, not heavily used for short local journeys.

In the 1930s, young children rode in perambulators or were carried by their mothers. Did the push-chair (now termed 'buggy') even exist? If it did, then of course the child had to be unstrapped from it, the chair folded up and all lifted, along with accompanying impedimenta, on to the bus. This went on into the 1990s – and sometimes does even to the present day. In the 1930s, unless the child was a baby in arms (carried free), it would fall under the absolute rule that it could not occupy a seat if an adult passenger was standing. That was a condition attaching to the allowance of child fares, and one universally observed.

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The Vehicle Fleet of May's Motors of Elstead

PETER MAY



The May's bus and taxi fleet at Glebe Meadow, Elstead in 1927 before the sale of the bus business to Aldershot & District. From left to right is Ford model T Tudor used as a taxi, Guy buses PF 8777 (on pneumatic tyres) and PD 2136, Ford model T bus TP 837 and the two charabancs.

Our Secretary asked me to write an article, elaborating on the makes and types of vehicles that we, as a small family business, purchased and used, most of which were mentioned in my recent book "The Full Turn of the Wheel". As described, this was spread over many years, from approximately 1920 to 1997. It caused me to really search the memory about the subject, and to try to find the underlying reasons for buying what we did at the time.

The range broadly was Bedford, Guy, Atkinson, and Scania. There were a few other makes operated from time to time, including some Dennis. So, what were some of the influencing factors?

Perhaps the main thing has been increased carrying capacity that has been achieved, from some two tons to twenty-five tons plus per load with goods carrying vehicles. From some fourteen passengers to over fifty on a single-deck bus and a very much-increased figure on modern double-deckers and an even greater figure on the new articulated buses. Aeroplanes and ships are carrying ever-greater numbers, and now trains are to be lengthened for more payload. All this has made a progressive impact on operators, manufacturers and legislators and is really an evolutionary process, with a common theme.

My parents' very first vehicle was a ¼-ton capacity van of unknown make. The first replacement in the early

twenties was a Ford T one-ton model, and the taxi was a Ford car. Therefore, the early influence was Ford. The buses were, two Fiat, two Guy, one Ford model T. A mixture of new and second-hand, bought I imagine for their apparent suitability of purpose and, without doubt, their price. My point is there would have been very little experience or operating knowledge to help to guide the decision to buy. That would only come the hard way.

Moving on a few years after the buses. There was a 1½-ton Ford lorry PL 5117 and an earlier Bedford. PJ 6931, which must have been one of the first Luton-built Bedfords, derived from imported Chevrolets, by General Motors. As a small boy, I remember hearing, but not understanding, much complaining about repeated failures of one universal joint on the Ford's propeller shaft, and this was quite difficult to replace. Because of this, Ford was out of favour and a new Bedford APF 418 was purchased in 1933. After this, a used Bedford CPL 6 and a further used Bedford EPL 861 were purchased in 1935 and 1936 respectively. So we are now all Bedford, all 2-tons capacity.

And we arrive at 1939. As stated in my book, the wartime replacement trucks were on Ministry of War Transport permit and from certain government-controlled suppliers as, obviously, military vehicle requirements came first. The main producers were Bedford, Ford, Dodge and Austin. All of these were similar in specification and the usual capacity was five tons. Our applications for new lorries were always Bedford, and luckily, that is what we were granted. In 1939, Bedford was probably ahead of the field in design with its "O" model. Consequently, the military specification that became the "OW" model, meaning 'O' wartime, was very easily adapted to become an army lorry. The main differences were wheels and

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Trying to Crush the "Monster"

At the end of the 19th century the steam tramway seemed to many an economic way of making urban transport faster and more efficient, but it was far from universally welcome. *John Hibbs* sent us this call upon the "Ratepayers of Erdington" in about 1890 to vote against a proposed steam tramway extension. It appeared in a book called *Bygone Erdington*, written and published by A.H. Saxton in 1928. At the time, he wrote, there were "two-horsed buses" from the Village Green to Salford Bridge, connecting with the Aston steam tram and a "hackney coach with iron-tyred wheels."

PROPOSED STEAM TRAMWAY EXTENSION

ASTON TO CHESTER ROAD.

OBJECTIONS:—

1.—That they will monopolize the Roads with unsightly STEAM ENGINES and cars, and cause considerable danger and inconvenience to the vehicular traffic, for which the Roads were made.

2.—That the Railway and Omnibus Companies have hitherto provided adequate accommodation for the district unattended by danger, and will naturally meet any increased want.

3.—That the Tram Roads will have to be Lighted, Guttered, and Kerbed, which will involve an extra rate in the Hamlet, and only benefit the few.

4.—That the speed of the STEAM ENGINES, combined with the unavoidable noise and rattle, will frighten the horses, and endanger foot passengers—especially children—crossing the Roads.

5.—That they will increase Sunday Traffic along the Roads.

6.—That it is not solely a question for carriage owners but the privacy of Residences fronting the Tram Roads will be overlooked and their value depreciated, and the present rural aspect of the district, which has attracted many to reside in the locality, will be destroyed.

7.—That they are not promoted by anyone having any interest in the neighbourhood beyond speculation.

RATEPAYERS OF ERDINGTON.

A Poll has been demanded on the above question, and will take place between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on TUESDAY, DECEMBER the 4th, at the Public Hall. VOTE EARLY, and crush the "MONSTER" by an overwhelming majority.

In France too, there were many who preferred the horse to steam traction. *Roger Atkinson* has drawn our attention to a number of petitions addressed to the local authorities there, cited in a book published in 2002 about tramways in the north of the country¹. This one was addressed to the

local mayor, by the good folk of Marcq en Baroeul, which today has been swallowed up by the city of Lille:

TRAMWAY – PROTEST AGAINST STEAM TRACTION – PETITION BY THE INHABITANTS

We the undersigned, inhabitants of Marcq en Baroeul,

Considering that the tramway administration is in the process of laying permanent way for steam traction, the municipal council, the defender of our interests, has always opposed this mode of traction,

Considering that experience has unfortunately shown all too well that serious accidents have brought about the death of man and children on this road,

Considering that the Commune of Marcq en Baroeul will be traversed along a distance of 7 kilometres classified as the third most used in [the département of] the Nord by horses and vehicles of all types on a road along which there are heavily attended schools, in consequence there will inevitably be serious accidents involving vehicles.

This road runs through our two principle centres of population. This winding road is far from being wide enough all along its length. The passage of locomotives and machines will inevitably lead to its deterioration.

We beg you, Monsieur le Maire, to take every necessary action to oppose the progress of the steam tramway. We protest with all energy. We insist upon animal traction.

Evidently Monsieur le Maire and his colleagues in neighbouring communes were impressed by such protests. On 19th April 1886 they wrote to the Prefect of the département:

We the undersigned mayors and deputy mayors of the communes of La Madeleine, Marcq en Baroeul and Mouvaux, in accordance with the wishes of those under our administration: in view of the numerous and legitimate objections arising from all sides in our respective communes concerning the 11,405-metre line, which is entirely on the territory of our three communes,

Insisting above all upon disengaging ourselves from any responsibility concerning the frequent and serious accidents which will inevitably occur from the passage of the steam tramway,

Expecting that a first accident could lead to another just as serious for which the vehicle owner would be responsible; often a violent shock results from the horses being frightened,

We beg you to be our intermediary with the Minister in the effort to obtain approval as soon as possible for the project for a horse-drawn tramway, and to set aside for ever approval of the project for steam traction.

By the mid-1890s however, steam trams had won the day on the line through Marcq en Baroeul, which ran from Lille to Tourcoing², but there was much ado about the state of the track. On 6th July 1897 the Compagnie des Tramways du Nord announced that works to upgrade the line had reached Marcq en Baroeul. "They have been

carried out on 3,500 metres of single and double track in the space of three months, an average of 60 metres per working day, a satisfactory figure considering that the old track has to be demolished and the new track laid at night so as not to disrupt the use of the line. Every morning the old track has to be connected to the new and paving relaid without interrupting the passage of cars."

Two years later the company was already planning its electrification.

1. *Les Tramways du Nord - Terribles et Fascinants*, Patrice Dufossé, Editions Nord Avril, 2002, ISBN 2-95133285-2-4.
2. See photo on the Internet at <http://lilletram.free.fr/debut/DE5.html>

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Midland Red's Railway Inheritance - former Great Western Railway vehicles and routes

PETER JAQUES & CHRISTOPHER DAVIS

In 1928 the 'big four' railway companies obtained powers, through Acts of Parliament, to operate motor buses, and rather than introduce competing bus services, it was decided that they would take a financial interest in established major bus companies. An agreement was signed with the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co. Ltd (BMMO) on 15th April 1930, as a result of which on 24th April 1930 the Birmingham & District Investment Trust Ltd., who held the whole of the issued ordinary shares in BMMO, sold half of their interest to the London Midland & Scottish and Great Western Railways, the LMS taking a 30% share and the GWR 20%. A standing committee of railway and Midland Red officials was set up to ensure appropriate co-ordination. Henceforth Midland Red letter headings and timetables proclaimed themselves as 'Midland Red and Railways Joint Motor Services'. This style of title continued up to World War II, after which the railway connection was relegated to small print.

Despite having no specific powers to operate buses, the GWR was, in fact, amongst the pioneers of motor bus operation, having commenced its first such service in 1903. Some of the early services were instituted to test

the traffic potential of a route suggested for railway extension whilst others replaced existing horse or motor feeder routes which had been provided by contractors, usually on a subsidy basis.

After the Great War a considerable number of new services was begun, some as commercial ventures and others, not in themselves profitable, either as a matter of policy or to try to develop traffic. The extension of road service operation led to the GWR's rights to operate being questioned. Some of the railways absorbed at the Grouping did have bus operating powers but it was doubtful that these could be used, by extension, to cover the GWR's own services. In consequence of the objections being raised, agreements defining spheres of influence were reached in 1925 which covered operations in North Wales, Cornwall and West Devon but similar negotiations with Devon General, Bristol Tramways and BMMO failed to reach any immediate conclusion.

After gaining bus operating powers in 1928, the GWR became rather more aggressive in starting new commercial routes and in purchasing existing operators, particularly where no agreement with the territorial

operator had been reached. In the BMMO area the attempts to begin a Tyseley, Yardley Wood and Solihull circular service and Wolverhampton - Albrighton - Shifnal services and an express service between Birmingham and Weston-super-Mare are well documented. The existing Blue Bus service of Cradley Heath was purchased, whose only regular service competed against a very high frequency Midland Red route. It seems likely that these moves were really intended to encourage the BMMO to the negotiating table by letting it be known that the railway company was capable of becoming an opposition nuisance.

By August 1929, the GWR was operating some 12 services within BMMO's area, listed below.

<i>Route</i>	<i>Commenced</i>
Old Hill - Halesowen (rail replacement service)	5 Dec 1927
Wyre Piddle - Pershore	16 July 1928
Pershore Station-Pershore (rail feeder)	16 July 1928
extended on Saturdays only beyond Pershore to Cornmoor by April 1929 (presumably via Defford Road rather than Three Springs Road)	
Cradley Heath - Dudley Purchased from Blue Bus	2 April 1929
Banbury - Chipping Norton - Burford - Swindon	1 July 1929
Banbury - Hook Norton - Chipping Norton	1 July 1929
Chipping Norton - Kingham - Bledington	1 July 1929
Moreton-in-Marsh - Shipston-on-Stour (rail replacement)	1 July 1929
Shipston-on-Stour - Ilmington	1 July 1929
Shipston-on-Stour - Great Wolford (Saturdays only) (to 21 Sep 1929 only)	6 July 1929
Shipston-on-Stour - Chipping Norton (Saturdays only) (to 25 Jan 1930 only)	28 Sep 1929
Wolverhampton-Aberystwyth via Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Knighton, Llandrindod Wells & Rhayader (seasonally withdrawn 29 Oct 1929 and not resumed 1930).	1 Aug 1929

There has also been a published reference to a GWR Stourbridge and Bridgnorth service being taken over by BMMO but this was a misunderstanding. Service 204 between Stourbridge Junction, Stourbridge, Kinver and Bridgnorth was a new Monday, Thursday and Saturday service begun on 31st May 1930. It was advertised as joint with the GWR because it included through road/rail bookings between Birmingham (Snow Hill) and Bridgnorth or intermediately. Originally worked by Dudley garage it was transferred to Stourbridge from 14th June but was obviously unsuccessful and last ran on 8th November 1930.

A minor mystery concerns the Shipston depot which GWR records give as opening on 1st July (Monday), the same date as Chipping Norton, but the Shipston branch passenger service did not end until 6th July (Saturday). Was there really both a bus and a rail service for a week? But, if not, what of the Ilmington service - did it start on 1st or 6th? Might a study of the local newspapers resolve this question?

Black Country operations

The Blue Bus Service between Cradley Heath and Dudley was started by Samuel Chevin and John Wallace Lawton. They took an eight-year lease on a wooden garage in King Street, Cradley Heath, from Charles Wright of Compton Road, Cradley Heath, who was a coal merchant. The lease

commenced on 1st May 1925 and the Dudley service began on 22nd May. (Around the 1960s, King Street was renamed Prince Street to avoid confusion with King Street, Old Hill, and as such still exists today.) The business was sold to Frederick E. Weston as from 4th September 1926 but Mr Lawton stayed on as a driver for Weston and in May 1930, the GWR listed him as 'leading driver grade 2' at three shillings a week more than the other drivers. Blue Bus presumably had some other activities because the Dudley & Stourbridge company reported that 17th March 1927 was the first date on which the Blue Bus new Maudslay had been used on service. This would presumably be RF 2869, new that month, so what was RF 2457, new the previous November, being used on?

The Great Western took over operations on 2nd April 1929 together with five single deck vehicles - a Guy, a Leyland and three Maudslays, and on the same date the service was extended at each end to Dudley and to Cradley Heath stations. On the first day one GWR and one Blue bus was used so it seems likely that the railway company was not satisfied with the standard of the other acquired vehicles. Indeed on 19th April, a brand new Maudslay 1620 (UL 8390) was brought into use, though this had moved on to Abergavenny within a couple of months, presumably when the Blue Bus vehicles had been brought up to standard.

The Halesowen and Old Hill service had replaced a frequent rail service which, it is thought, created pathing difficulties for the freight service over the single line. No doubt the distance of Halesowen station from the town centre was also a disadvantage, which was overcome by running the replacing buses to the Bull's Head. By the time BMMO took over, the service was operated from premises rented on a weekly tenancy from Mr. J. B. Downing in New Road, Halesowen, but it is not known whether this had been the case ever since the service began.

Once the railway company had secured a shareholding in BDI, steps were taken to transfer the railway bus services. In most such cases, vehicles were transferred at

valuation and no question of goodwill arose as these transfers were considered as forming part of the wider investment and this is what happened with the Halesowen service. However, for the Cradley service, the GWR required, as well as payment for the vehicles, a settlement to include goodwill and the value of the leasehold garage to the same amount as they had paid to Weston for the business. An adjustment was made because the oldest Blue Bus, 1924 Guy BA EH 5254, which became GWR 1064, had been withdrawn and removed from the district. No doubt GWR 1587 of July 1929 was its replacement.

There were normally five buses at Cradley and three at Halesowen but a further complication was that the GWR company usually placed two additional vehicles in the Black Country for the summer months and proposed to hand these over. As these would simply be more non-standard vehicles BMMO asked that these should be disposed of elsewhere if possible and this was duly arranged.

All of the Cradley drivers and conductors were taken over but only one Halesowen driver, the remainder opting to remain with the railway. Mr. Power said that he was willing to take over Mr. Weston (who had been retained by the GWR as their local manager) but this offer was not taken up. Weston also owned Weston's Dairies in Corngreaves Road, Cradley Heath as well as an ice-making plant nearby so was not without other interests.

The Cradley Heath and Dudley service had been run with co-ordinated timings by BMMO and GWR since 6th January 1930 so it was simple on 24th May to subsume the GW journeys into the existing BMMO 243 service worked by Dudley garage. The railway company's early journey at 5.30 a.m. from Cradley Heath Station to Hingleys' Works at Netherton was also taken over and continued by BMMO.

The Old Hill - Halesowen service was numbered 229 and continued to be worked from the Halesowen base until 31st October 1930 when that garage was closed down. From the following day, the service was operated by buses from Dudley garage.

It was intended to sublet the Cradley Heath premises at once but difficulty was encountered in finding a tenant. Eventually a Mr. W. E. Green, Iron and Steel Merchant of Cokeland Street, Cradley Heath, took the premises on a monthly tenancy from 19th September 1930 for storage. Green vacated the premises on 19th December 1931 and steps were then taken to negotiate a surrender of the 1925 lease from Charles Wright, the deed of surrender being completed on 14th April 1932. By this time, incidentally, Wright was no longer a coal merchant but was described as a licensed victualler of the Five Ways Hotel, Cradley. In fact he was also a bus or coach operator, his first known vehicle being acquired in 1928. His original base is not known but he later took over his King (Prince) Street premises and worked from there until operations ceased in June 1960.

The Vehicles with BMMO

The vehicles acquired from the GWR were allocated 1235-1242 in BMMO's 'A' number list and all known detail

relating to them appears below.

It was reported that on 21st January 1930, 1255, 1530/96 were at Halesowen, 1063, 1587/97/8 were at Cradley and 1232 was at Birmingham for repairs.

Mr Shire reported that he had taken over the eight vehicles on Friday night 23rd May and some re-allocation took place. The three newest Maudslays (1232, 1530/87) were allocated to Halesowen. The Guy and the Maudslay coach were locked in the garage at Cradley while the Leyland and the two oldest Maudslays were withdrawn to Carlyle (Midland Red's Central Works). The two left at Cradley must have been a very short-term expedient (probably only days) as BMMO immediately attempted to sublet the premises

It seems likely that the Leyland was withdrawn to Carlyle as Shire knew this would be an easy vehicle to sell. It was advertised in the trade press and sold quickly; it seems unlikely to have operated under BMMO ownership. The Guy had worked from Halesowen (Cradley did not carry Guy spares) and was also advertised for sale in July. Although not finally sold until June 1931 it seems very unlikely to have seen service with Midland Red; it was not included in a fleet list of 31st December 1930.

Precise details of the activities of the Maudslays are not known but in July 1930, three S.O.S. vehicles were allocated to Halesowen to release the three Maudslays in use there and all six Maudslays are known to have been allocated to Hereford by August. There is a photograph of normal control model RF 2869 and forward control YU 4107 in St. Peter's Square, bound for Bredwardine and Ross respectively. RF 2869 had undergone some modification by BMMO, being fitted with a stencil number box, and losing the roof mounted destination box it had carried when with the GWR. Both vehicles display MIDLAND fleet names and were almost certainly in red livery, as they appear to be in an all-over colour and lack the cream above the waistrail which they would have had with GWR.

It is improbable that Maudslays operated from anywhere except Hereford and Halesowen as it would have been pointless to hold spares at other garages for one or two odd buses. The sale of the Maudslays as one batch in November 1930 suggests that they were withdrawn at the end of October when there would have been many seasonal re-allocations.

The remaining GWR operations

On 12th May, 1930, the GWR company wrote to BMMO giving details of the remaining railway services in Midland Red territory which should be handed over. The disposition of the fleet was specified as: Chipping Norton (which seemed to include Shipston) with three 20-seat Guys and one 14-seat Morris, the latter no doubt being the Shipston vehicle; Pershore was the home of one 18-seat Thornycroft whilst Swindon (for the Banbury service) had three 32-seat Thornycrofts.

On 4th June, 1930, Mr Power wrote to his Chairman, R. J. Howley, reporting that he had gone carefully into the question of taking over the GWR services around Chipping Norton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Banbury, Shipston,

etc. and "I find that we shall have to take over 14, 18, 22 and 26 seater 'Buses, all various makes and types and run them from isolated 'Barns', mostly as one man 'Buses, which will be very awkward under our Midland 'Red' regime."

Power went on to write that he had considered suggesting to the GWR Company that the Stratford Blue or the Evesham Reliance take over the services but had come to the conclusion that it would be unwise to strengthen the position of either of those companies in this way, even if the railway company would agree. He concluded that the best suggestion was to offer all the services along with the BMMO Banbury garage and services to the Oxford company. On Mr Howley's copy of the letter, the single word "No" is written against this suggestion. After this, nothing seems to have happened for some months, though it is known that the attitude of the National Union of Railwaymen to the transfers was one of the main difficulties.

There were some minor alterations. At Pershore the Saturday extension to Cornmoor last ran on 20th September 1930 and on 31st December 1930, Shipston depot closed, the services to Ilmington and Moreton being withdrawn without replacement; even the one-man operated 14-seater must have worked at a loss. On 6th March 1931, a meeting was held at Paddington to discuss the transfer of the remaining GWR services. In addition to the GWR officials, there were present Messrs. Cownie (Oxford), Power (Midland Red) and Pittard and Imison (Bristol). In view of the Award of the National Wages Board published the previous day, it was felt that there was now a radical change as regards GW rates of

pay in relation to the wages paid by the bus companies and that it would now be an opportune time once more to approach the staff concerned. The bus company representatives stated that they were prepared to take over the GW men if they accepted the 'road' conditions of service and it was agreed that a GW officer and a bus company representative should jointly interview the men concerned to explain the position and endeavour to effect the necessary transfers.

At the meeting Mr Power intimated that he "had no proper garage accommodation at Banbury" and Mr Pittard referred to operating difficulties if it was necessary for the Bristol company to stable the vehicles overnight which would "necessitate a good deal of dead mileage" and the matter was left for discussion between them. Services in the Chipping Norton area passed from GWR to BMMO from 1st February 1932. The Banbury - Swindon service became a joint operation shared between BMMO (498) and Bristol Tramways (72), whilst the Banbury - Chipping Norton service became a wholly BMMO operation. The Chipping Norton - Bledington section continued in GWR hands until 20th February 1932 when it passed to City of Oxford Motor Services. Through operation by the two companies between Banbury and Swindon continued until 23rd September 1939, after which it was withdrawn as part of the wartime cuts. Bristol Tramways continued with 72 as Swindon - Burford only until June 1943. They reinstated their service in October 1947 and BMMO reinstated Banbury - Burford on 6th December 1947 but there was no through service again. The 498 last ran on 15th March 1969.

Vehicles acquired by BMMO from GWR, 24th May 1930:

BMMO GWR

A No.	No.	Reg. No.	Make	Chassis No.	Body	Seating	BMMO Body No.	Date New
1235	1587	UU4814	Maudslay ML3B	4676	Vickers	B32R	BB1757	7/29
			New to GWR. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3050), 11/30, then to P. Owen & Sons, Abberley, -/34; C. T. Sargeant, Kington, -/38, withdrawn 12/49 and scrapped 1/50.					
1236	1232	YU4106	Maudslay ML3B	4180	Buckingham	B32R	BB1758	12/27
			New to GWR. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3049), 11/30; then to showman, 6/35.					
1237	1530	YU4107	Maudslay ML3B	4178	Vickers	B32R	BB1759	12/27
			Exhibited at Commercial Motor Show 1927. New to GWR as no. 1230, renumbered to 1530 c3/28. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3048), 11/30; last licensed 5/34.					
1238	1598	RF3348	Maudslay ML3A	4158	Buckingham	C32F	BB1760	6/27
			New to F. E. Weston (Blue Bus), Four Ways, Cradley Heath, and acquired by GWR 4/29. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3051), 11/30, later to W. Ward & Son, Wolverhampton -/34; last licensed 6/36.					
1239	1255	YE7310	Guy FBB	22257	Hall Lewis	B32R	BB1761	3/27
			New to GWR. Sold to G. Williams & Co. Ltd., Matlock Bath, 6/31, taken over by North Western Road Car Co. Ltd. (204), 3/32, and withdrawn the same year. No further operator.					
1240	1596	RF2457	Maudslay ML4	3986	Buckingham	B26F	BB176211/26	
			New to F. E. Weston (Blue Bus), Four Ways, Cradley Heath, and acquired by GWR 4/29. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3052), 11/30; then to unidentified operator, Middlesex (as goods), 9/34; reported broken up 12/35.					
1241	1597	RF2869	Maudslay ML4A	4064	Buckingham	B26F	BB17633/27	
			New to F. E. Weston (Blue Bus), Four Ways, Cradley Heath, and acquired by GWR 4/29. Sold to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd. (3053), 11/30; later to unidentified owner, Devon, 12/33.					

1242 1063 RF4964 Leyland TS1 60103 Leyland B30F BB17649/28
 New to F. E. Weston (Blue Bus), Four Ways, Cradley Heath, and acquired by GWR 4/29.
 Sold to West Yorkshire Road Car Co. Ltd. (519), 7/30; transferred to Keighley-West Yorkshire Services Ltd. (K519), 4/34;
 later to United Automobile Services Ltd. and converted to parcels van (PL70), 12/44; to British Road Services
 (Tyne/Tees parcels group D10), Newcastle-on-Tyne, 7/50 and withdrawn 5/51.

The Pershore - Pershore Station / Wyre Piddle routes passed to BMMO on 15th February 1932. The Wyre Piddle service had been operated separately from that to the Station, although there had been two Wyre Piddle - Pinvin - Pershore Station positioning journeys. No vehicles were involved in these 1932 transfers.

Various versions of the model types have been published for the Maudslay vehicles. The name 'Masta' which is also sometimes used was not introduced for the ML3 until 1932 at which time the ML4 also became marketed as the 'Montrose'. The actual variations between types are unclear but wheelbase and engine size appear to be the main differences. The designations for the vehicles listed here are taken from Maudslay's records (through courtesy of Desmond Southgate) and may be taken to be correct even though we may not know exactly what they signified. Even so, there remains a doubt with UUI 4814.

When Shire inspected the fleet he recorded actual chassis and engine numbers where he could find them. GW 1597/8 agree with the Maudslay records but for GW 1587 which Maudslay say was an ML3B, Shire records the chassis plate as ML3A.4676.

Furthermore he expressed his opinion that this vehicle was really earlier than July 1929 but may have been purchased as a 1929 re-conditioned vehicle; this seems improbable but there must have been something non-standard and maybe the variant chassis code has some connection.

Sources:

BMMO Fleet History PD3, Omnibus Society/PSV Circle (1961).

Midland Red Vol. 1, Gray, Keeley & Seale (1978).

Railway Motor Buses & Bus Services in the British Isles 1902-1933 Vol. 2, John Cummings, (1980).

Various Midland Red files, courtesy of the Kithead Trust. Additional information supplied by K.D. Jubb

Recollections of a Roadman - Life in the Ministry

PAUL JEFFORD

During that early period of life before the birthdays come in double figures, playing in the dust of the farm lane that ran past our house, I formed a firm resolve to become a roadman. This ambition was fulfilled in 1955 when I joined the Highways Trunk Roads Division of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation and began to assist with the administration of trunk road major improvement schemes across the south of England.

I do not recall when I first became aware of road numbers, though I am sure I learned about A roads and B roads at quite an early age. But before beginning that first job in MTCA I am pretty certain if anyone had used the word "trunk" in my hearing, the first images conjured would have been of objects on the front end of an elephant, at the back end of a car, or in the middle of a wood.

Very soon I learned what a trunk road was and became familiar with the lists included in the Trunk Roads Acts of 1936 and 1946, 71 in total. I also learned that there were C roads - Class III roads - and unclassified roads, which were the responsibility of the Classified Roads Division. Also in the frame was the Special Roads Act 1949, under which were built the motorways, although none was in operation as yet.

The highway authority for the trunk roads was the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, with the County Councils (who were themselves highway authorities for non-trunk roads) acting on his behalf. Within the Ministry were also professional highways engineers, with whom we administrators worked very closely. The contact with agent authority staff was maintained at Divisional Road Engineer level.

My job was the administration of trunk road major improvement schemes from initial preparation through to

completion of work and final payment. We worked to guidance entitled "Trunk Road Instructions". The Ministry had its own reference number for each trunk road, e.g. the London-Brighton Trunk Road (A23) was Trunk Road No 5, London-Penzance was Trunk Road No 8. It also had reference numbers for the agent authorities, East Sussex County Council being No. 41 and West Sussex 42.

Major improvements ranged from realigning a bend or improving a junction right up to building a major bypass. The first file I was given to look at was that for the Handcross Bypass, then in East Sussex, only 3½ miles from my home. In the large room where I sat, other staff were busy preparing the statutory Order for diverting the route of the London-Penzance Trunk Road between Dummer Down and Honiton (to follow the A303 instead of the A30). Cries of "trunking" and "detrunking" abounded - again nothing whatsoever to do with major elephant surgery.

There was separate funding under the Roads etc (England and Wales) Vote for major improvements on the one hand and maintenance and minor improvements (M&MI) on the other. With major improvement money in short supply, the engineers must sometimes have found it tempting to undertake major improvement work as M&MI. Who is to say the odd length of dual carriageway here and there didn't get built in this way?

Of all the jobs in my varied career this was the one I enjoyed the most, and to this day I can find myself remarking as I pass some road junction or go through a village somewhere: "This was one of my schemes." It is often satisfying to be in at the beginning of things, and the mid-1950s were the time when the Roads Programme was beginning to get under way again after the disruption of World War II.

Some of the first schemes to be put in hand were those, such as the Handcross Bypass, where the land had been acquired in the 1930s but work had been postponed or suspended following the outbreak of hostilities. The Handcross Bypass duly got built around the early 1960s (must research the precise date some time) and went into use. As a postscript, some thirty years later I was chatting to a fellow historic vehicle owner in Sheffield, who said he had been busy planning an improvement of the A23 which

involved demolishing my Handcross Bypass bridge to make way for a new one.

Apart from driving on the highways in an assortment of vehicles, my activities as a roadman are now confined to raking and weeding my own drive. But that first posting to MTCA left the lasting legacy of a deepened interest in roads which has marched well with a passion for vehicles that also began in the earliest period of my life.

Wrexham District Tramways versus Wrexham, Ruabon & Llangollen Turnpike Trust

TONY NEWMAN

It may be said that turnpikes finally gave way to tramways in Britain in 1888 when the Local Government Act transferred responsibility for main roads to the newly formed County Councils. But the future of turnpikes had looked decidedly bleak ever since the first tramway opened in Birkenhead in 1860. The process was hastened by the Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act of 1878 which set up the Highway Authorities. Those Turnpike Trusts which survived until 1885 were given until 1st November 1886 under the Annual Turnpike Acts Continuance Act 1885. Even then it was not until 1895 that the Anglesey portion of the Shrewsbury to Holyhead Turnpike was laid to rest.

The Wrexham Ruabon and Llangollen Turnpike Trust (The Trust), through its Clerk Mr. Edwin Wyatt, was probably one of the most vigorous to stand up for itself against the coming of a tramway, in this case the Wrexham District Tramways (WDT), ably defended by Mr. Evan Morris, a solicitor of Arcade Chambers, Wrexham. The writing was already on the wall in the form of a petition¹ in 1870 to abolish turnpike gates in Wrexham Highway District. The correspondence that forms the basis of this article is contained in a file² at The National Archives.

The WDT obtained powers under a Local Act³ of 1873 for a 3-ft gauge line running just over 6 miles south-west from Wrexham, and was among the early schemes after the passing of the Tramways Act 1870. On 11th May 1875 written notice was served by WDT to The Trustees, informing them of its intention to begin work at 10am on 19th May 1875. This would involve breaking up part of the Turnpike Road between No.4 Ruabon Road, Wrexham, and the New Inn at Rhos, near Ruabon. Authority to do so was contained in Section 5 of Wrexham District Tramways Act 1873. The initial response from Mr. Wyatt was to ask for copies of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act 1845, The Tramways Act 1870 and the WDT Act 1873. Mr. Wyatt appeared to offer no objection to the work proceeding and suggested that WDT should make a proposal to The Trust for 'an arrangement'. The reply from Mr. Morris was prompt, and part is worth quoting:

I am instructed..... to negotiate with you for the purchase of the interest of the Trustees.....in that portion of the Road under their control which lies between the Swan Inn in Pen y Bryn Wrexham and the New Inn Rhos. The distance is a little over 3 miles upon which there is one gate namely the Wrexham Gate at which the Trustees receive tolls and which I am informed

amount to about £280 per annum. The cost of keeping in repair that portion of the Road has been carefully gone into by the Company's Engineer and he estimates that it will amount to about £120 per annum. I understand also that the cost of keeping a Toll Collector amounts to about £16 per annum. On the basis of these figures I am instructed to offer the Trustees for their Interest in the portion of the road above mentioned and the Tolls thereon £220 and to enter into an Agreement with them similar to the one entered into with the Trustees of the Wrexham and Mold Turnpike Road which is scheduled to the Company's Act a copy of which I have already sent you. This offer is based on the assumption that if an agreement were entered into it would come into operation on 1st July next and we should then be purchasing the Trustees' Interest for 16 months as their Act will expire on 1st November 1876.

Mr. Wyatt immediately responded politely, but defensively, with a question about how WDT intended to place the rails relative to the Toll Gate. The reply was to the effect that the tramway would run through the gate and thus avoid any alteration to the structure. The correspondence was put before The Trust on 20th May and met with a completely negative response. The Trust maintained that it had no power to enter into an arrangement of the kind proposed and secondly it declined the proposal regarding the Gate.

WDT evidently decided to go ahead without reaching an agreement. This surprised Mr. Wyatt, who wrote to Mr. Morris on 19th July, complaining, "I perceive that there are parties laying down a Tramway line between the Swan Inn and the Wrexham Gate, which has stopped traffic on that part of the Turnpike Road." His letter goes on to challenge the legality of such action and quotes Section 40 of the enabling Act, which requires such work to be completed within two years of the passing of the Act. His letter concludes "...the continued occupation of the Turnpike Road as at present may affect the very responsible position of the Trustees of the road of which it is my duty to apprise the Trustees and have already done so." Mr. Morris replied on 22nd July pointing out that the works were begun some time before the compulsory powers expired and that it seldom happens that public undertakings are completed within the time limited by the Act. He concluded by suggesting that representatives of WDT should meet Mr. Wyatt to discuss the matter.

This discussion took place later the same day, attended by Mr. Low[e] (a Director of WDT) Mr. Wyatt and possibly a

Trustee, and the following day an offer was made to Mr. Wyatt of £100 for loss of tolls, but he declined this at once. An increased offer was made to include an amount equal to tolls received during a corresponding period for the previous three years, but this was declined also. The meeting broke up without agreement and on the 24th July a Formal Notice dated 23rd July was served on the Directors and other representatives of WDT warning that, as the powers for the works had expired on 16th July 1875, if the work continued they did so at their peril of being proceeded against.

Mr. Morris wrote back on 27th July expressing surprise at this turn of events, especially as Mr. Wyatt had authorised the Formal Notice on the same day that the offer had been made, and without consulting the Trustees. Mr. Morris went on to warn that WDT will strenuously oppose any application for an injunction on the part of The Trust and to express the view that a Court of Equity would not grant an injunction in these circumstances. He concluded by suggesting that The Trustees reconsider the matter and perhaps refer it to independent arbitration.

Mr. Wyatt wrote a long letter to Mr. Morris on 29th July, beginning by disputing the correctness of Mr. Morris' statements and reiterating the belief that the powers to complete the work had expired. Somehow the date of expiry was brought forward to 16th June in this letter, instead of 16th July previously referred to. Possibly this was a move by Mr. Wyatt to cover the fact that work had begun on 14th July and this could be argued to be within the authorised period. His letter went on to complain about lengths of 300 yards of the Turnpike Road being broken up when the law allowed no more than 100 yards at a time. As a result one serious accident had occurred. He acknowledged that the Formal Notice was being prepared while he and Mr. Morris *'were in conference on my lawn at Bryn Tiron[?]'* on 23rd but saw nothing strange about this. He concluded by agreeing to meet the WDT Director Mr. Lowe again, with one of the Trustees being present.

On 11th August Mr. Morris wrote again to Mr. Wyatt informing him that his clients were anxious to know what kind of proposal would be acceptable to The Trust, but received a reply that the only proposal worth discussing would be how to terminate the construction of the Tramway. Mr. Morris returned swiftly with the suggestion that a deputation of Directors should wait upon Mr. Wyatt, in the presence of Mr. Morris. On 23rd August Mr. Wyatt *"declined to be drawn into a discussion on points which appear to me to be unanswered and unquestionable."* Having, understandably, received no reply to this uncompromising stance, Mr. Wyatt wrote again on 26th August expressing his concern that WDT

proposed to open the line on 1st September and that he felt it his duty *"to say the matter cannot be trifled with any longer.....and measures will be taken at once as are available to prevent your establishing a traffic on the Turnpike Road without any legal right and in a manner that may be considered a nuisance at law."*

Mr. Morris appears to have taken a holiday at the end of August, during which time his Managing Clerk wrote a short note to Mr. Wyatt to say that information about a proposed opening date for the Tramway was unfounded. There was also a brief meeting, but this made no change to the situation. Meanwhile, Mr. Wyatt had lost no time in addressing his version of the situation to The Board of Trade (BoT) by letter on 27th August. On his return from holiday, Mr. Morris found a letter from the BoT awaiting him, together with a copy of the letter they had received from Mr. Wyatt. Mr. Morris felt bound to put the record straight and wrote back to the BoT on 4th September. This letter contained two details that had not emerged in the earlier correspondence. One was that under Section 26 of The Tramways Act 1870, the Trustees were under an obligation to give superintendence during the building of the Tramway. The second was the fact that The Trust would expire on 1st November 1876 under The Annual Turnpike Acts Continuance Act of 1872. After that date, control of the road would be vested in the Wrexham District Highway Board. Mr. Morris evidently felt it was prudent to conclude his letter with expressions of regret that the Tramway was not completed within the time specified by the Special Act. Disappointingly for Mr. Morris, The BoT refused to intervene, on the grounds that their role was solely to declare the line fit for public use at the appropriate time.

Whether Mr. Wyatt's health had been undermined by his strenuous efforts to keep the WDT at bay is not evident from the papers in the file, but it is recorded that he died in January 1876. After this, the opposition seemed to melt away and the Board of Trade Inspection was conducted by Col. Yolland on 26 May 1876. He went over the line between the Swan Inn at Wrexham and The New Inn, where the road to Rhos leaves the Turnpike. The report noted only two intermediate loops on this single-track line, and single-horse cars capable of carrying twenty passengers were to provide the service. While approving the line for opening, the Colonel observed that, as no portion of the road along which the tramway ran was paved with granite or asphalt, the Company was likely to find it expensive to maintain.

- 1 Denbighshire Record Office DRO DD/DM/228/55
- 2 File MT6 159/1
- 3 36 & 37 Vic 1, c. lxxvi

NA3T WEBSITE

The National Archive of Transport, Travel and Trade aims to collect together as many original images (negatives or slides) as possible of roads, shops, factories and the transport that served them. Since 1996 it has collected hundreds of colour negatives and slides and many thousands of original black and white negatives.

These have come from both professional and amateur photographers. To fund its work it sells photos to enthusiasts on a not-for-profit basis.

Its website is at www.transportphotos.org

Association Matters

◆◆◆
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NEWSLETTER No.54

- ☐ The target date for issue of No. 54 is 5 June

Contributions to
Tony Newman, 21 Ffordd
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(*toekneenewman@hotmail.com*)
by 9 May

- ☐ Provisional target date for No. 55 is 4 September

Contributions by
5 August

- ☐ The 2008 subscription covers Nos. 53 to 56

- ☐ Peter Jaques has replaced Chris Hogan as our Company Secretary

- ☐ A warm welcome to two new members:
Alan Bailey, of Farlington, Portsmouth
Reg Davies, of London

Reg hopes to be at our next Members' Meeting in Coventry to outline his work on the Southern Railway's response to road competition in the inter-war years.

- ☐ At its meeting on 17th July 2007 the R&RTHA Board approved a revised version of the Association's Mission Statement, more fully to reflect its objectives and the range of activities in which its members are engaged.

MISSION STATEMENT - 2007

- 1 The objective of the Association is to promote, encourage and co-ordinate the study of the history of roads, and of road passenger transport and the carriage of goods by road.
- 2 In this it acts as a clearing-house between societies and associations, museums and individuals concerned with particular aspects of this field, and by organising

events to promote and enhance research and interchange of information among all who may be concerned.

- 3 In particular, it provides a Newsletter on a regular basis, and publishes the papers presented at its conferences. It also publishes from time to time books on subjects related to its members' interests.
- 4 Members of the Association are encouraged to contribute the outcome of their own research and to exchange relevant material with corporate members as may be appropriate.
- 5 The Association sets out to provide a meeting ground for everyone concerned with roads and road transport and their history, and who share similar aims and interests, and to record and circulate to its members information concerning new data and new data sources.
- 6 The Association provides advice to its members, and to transport undertakings, concerning the retention and disposal of archives and similar material, to ensure their safe keeping and availability for research.

Editorial

Roger Atkinson, who has edited the *Newsletter* for the past four years, has decided to step down so that he can devote more time to his many other activities. We wish him well and we thank him wholeheartedly for the high standard that he has set and maintained throughout the 16 issues for which he was responsible. It can be no coincidence that membership of the R&RTHA has grown during this time, and we have every intention of maintaining the quality of the *Newsletter* and the spread of its coverage across roads and the varied transport systems that they serve.

A new Editor will be appointed in the near future. At a moment of

change for the *Newsletter*, it seems appropriate that one theme that comes through this time is change. There are always those who resist it, like the people who didn't like steam tramways, those who embrace it by, for example, enjoying a first outing on the motorway, or the innovation that makes it happen.

To all members of the Association: please keep your contributions coming. That is what makes the *Newsletter* a success. Pending appointment of the new Editor, we are asking for contributions to No. 54 to be sent to Tony Newman, as the Association's Research Coordinator.

Leaving No Stone Unturned

The Association organised this event at the Leeds City Museum & Art Gallery on 27th October 2007. There was generous sponsorship both by our corporate member, the PSV Circle and in this Yorkshire setting, by Transdev Blazefield of Harrogate, the holding company for three major bus operators, all serving Leeds – Transdev Harrogate & District, Transdev Keighley & District and Transdev Yorkshire Coastliner. The sponsorship money helped the Association to run the meeting as a low-cost event. The Chairman of the meeting, Dr David Robinson, and all the speakers gave their services free and charged minimal, if any, expenses. So, the Association has many people to thank – our sponsors, our speakers, our caterers, the Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery, and all those who attended.

The booklet has now been published. It is available at £5.00 post free from Roger Atkinson, 45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU (cheques payable to 'Roads and Road Transport History Association Ltd.'). It sets out all the papers presented at the meeting, followed by other significant material as described in these notes.

The opening address was by Councillor (and transport historian) Stanley King. A delightful and truly welcoming, "Welcome to West Yorkshire" embodying many facets of either learning from road transport history over the past 130 years – or of failing to learn from history and reinventing the wheel.

There followed a serious opening paper by Dr Roy Edwards. It was a study of the records, primarily at the National Archives, on the rise of road haulage from 1919 to nationalisation in 1948. Both Railway Clearing House records and the railway companies' own records were stressed as being invaluable sources on the technology, the marketing and the local operating conditions of the railways' competitors in the 1930s. He mentioned the array of papers generated at nationalisation, including those on Compensation of Road Undertakings (with National Archive references given in the published booklet). The return of undertakings to the private sector in 1953 gave rise to more archives. As Dr Edwards concludes: "This paper is intended to whet the appetites of those who might be tempted to use the business and technical records of road haulage in the National Archives."

Stephen Lockwood's talk dwelt on his own experiences as a transport history author in unlocking the material that is already in one's own collection or personal library or by tapping the knowledge of those who have already accessed local material. These are sources which can be under-appreciated.

In the booklet, there follows a paper specially written for it by Dr David Robinson of the British Records Association, who chaired the meeting; it is on Local Record Offices and the History of Roads and Road Transport. He ranges widely, touching on local government boundaries and organisation over the years, the records of Turnpike Trustees, the advent of heavy

vehicles, traffic censuses, weighbridges and vehicle licensing and Constabulary records. He stresses the value of local newspapers to supplement sometimes uninformative Minutes. He mentions that the late nineteenth century coaching revival features at the Surrey Heritage Centre. The business records of a piano manufacturer give details of how pianos were transported; this may suggest that other business records can contain quite unexpected transport-relevant material.

Peter Brown's paper on using the Internet is one to settle down with at your computer, trying out many sites. Lots of clues and suggestions.

Dr Charles Roberts' "Recording Contemporary Oral History – Some Experiences" – is an academic paper that was nonetheless lucid to follow as Dr Roberts delivered it. The paper is based on one specific project conducted at the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, in the period 1999 to 2003. The purpose is described, followed by the protocols used during the interview programme, and the paper concludes with some general points. It was a project "To analyse the effect of ownership changes in the bus industry in Great Britain during the period following Transport Act 1985". Individuals still in, or until recently involved in, management or ownership, legislators, participators involved as employee-owners, and trade unions were sought out. To a high degree the persons approached were willing to be interviewed. The whole paper now makes fascinating reading, and contains many lessons – particularly in the matters of a pre-determined structure and assured confidentiality – that are not in any way confined to transport. It is a blueprint for the whole process of recording oral history.

No reader should look on Alan Earnshaw's as simple advice that we all know anyway. Writing simple advice is a difficult exercise if it achieves its aim and appears 'simple'. There is a great deal of sound advice embodied in this paper; it deserves to be read with fully as much care and attention as all the other papers in this booklet. There would be few editors who would not endorse what Professor Earnshaw forthrightly and entertainingly told us.

Roger Atkinson, at the end, gave a hurried 'taster', not a polished presentation, on the relevance of patents in historical research. In text form in this booklet, it may even be comprehensible.

The booklet does not finish with the various papers presented at or prepared for "Leaving no Stone Unturned", nor even with the thoughtful page that follows, on "Building Bridges", contributed by Robert Howard of Local History Online. Those who attended were invited to nominate any organisation – charitable, commercial, enthusiast or public body – with some connection with history, archives or road transport, to receive "200 words" free publicity in this booklet. Some who attended were not interested in this opportunity, but

the majority took it up. The interpretation both of "200 words" and of the criteria, have been allowed considerable elasticity. Readers may judge whether the results have been worthwhile. Hopefully, they will feel that the wide diversity of contributions contain interesting pointers both to sources to which they may feel that they can contribute, and to sources for research of which they might never have thought. The central purpose of the event in Leeds was to bring together different strands of research – and not entirely as a one-way exercise.

R&RTHA members, both corporate and individual, have collectively, colossal knowledge and archives. The 35 contributions include organisations asking for the donation and deposit of archives with them, others asking where archival material that their activities have generated may best be deposited, and many others promote either publications or resources for research of which readers may be quite unaware. "Can this source help me?" and "Can I help this source?" are both legitimate questions. The 35 entries are from:

Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society
British Records Association
Bus Users UK
Buses Worldwide *
Business Archives Council
Commercial Vehicle and Road Transport Club *
Ephemera Society, The
Fylde Tramway Society

Hebden Bridge Local History Society
History in the making
Howden Transport Heritage
Institute of Railway Studies and Transport History *
Institute of Transport Administration *
Kent Family History Society
Kithead Trust, The *
Leeds Civic Trust
Liverpool & South West Lancashire Family History Society
North East Bus Preservation Trust
Novice Researcher, A
Omnibus Society, The *
Online Transport Archive
PSV Circle, The *
Post Office Vehicle Club *
Railway & Canal Historical Society *
Second World War Experience Centre
Slaidburn Heritage Archive
Solo Publications
Thoresby Society, The
Tramway Museum Society *
Transport Operations Research Group, Newcastle-upon-Tyne University
Transport Ticket Society *
UK Bus Awards
University of the Third Age
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority
Yorkshire Archaeological Society – Family History Section

* Corporate member of the Roads & Road Transport History Association

Letters to the Editor

☐ WANTED: A HISTORY OF BRITISH ROAD FREIGHT SERVICES

As our members will know, my work has been largely in the field of passenger transport, but in the course of teaching transport economics in several universities I have had to find out as much as I could about the movement of freight. I have I hope been able to master the principles of the matter, with much help from writers such as David Lowe, but I still feel that I do not have the 'feel' for the industry that I would like.

The history of any industry is important for its understanding and analysis. It may be significant that the number of 'key dates' I set out for my students runs to many more pages for passenger movement than for freight, but the story is still there. And while I have been actively involved in the bus and coach industry and its development, I have very little experience for haulage and distribution. What I would like to see is a book of the same kind as my own *History of British Bus Services*, so I am writing to you to ask whether any of our members would take it on – or might know someone who would.

I am reminded of this gap in my knowledge as I see the vehicles that move on our roads. With most buses and coaches I can recognise the fleet and have some insight into the firm and its history, but with vans and trucks I am at a loss. Perhaps for a start someone would like to do an article for our excellent Newsletter. I do hope so.

John Hibbs

☐ TRADE DISCRPTIONS

When undertaking genealogical research there are a number of websites available that purport to explain what the various, mainly archaic, trade occupations encountered actually comprised. Unfortunately it would appear on examination that some of those relating to road transport are often far from precise and in some cases downright misleading. One cannot really say that a 'Jobmaster' was solely 'one who hired out carriages to the gentry', the term has far broader implications than that. Likewise lumping 'Carrier', 'Carter' and 'Carman' together as 'the driver of a cart' is surely disingenuous to anyone with a modicum of knowledge of the horse-drawn era.

It is proposed to draw up a more insightful list of definitions of road transport occupations, initially to publish in a future *Newsletter* for comment thereon and subsequently to circulate within the Family History fraternity in the hope that they might be incorporated into the various tools available to the uninitiated. In the interim, if anyone has views on the subject they would be welcomed by the undersigned in compiling this.

Dave Bubier

A Day Out on the M6

DAVID GRIMMETT

Excursions and Tours are an often overlooked area of PSV operation, yet account for a significant proportion of many operators' income. As part of a wider study of these operations my interest was drawn to a report that Ribble had operated an excursion specifically to enable people to travel on Britain's first section of motorway, the Preston By-Pass, when it opened in 1958. A bolt of inspiration struck me - perhaps the Ribble Enthusiasts Club might be able to throw some light on the matter. My initial disappointment that their archives held no leaflets advertising the tour was soon dispelled by the promise that a search would be made through the contemporary staff magazines. I soon discovered the Ribble staff bulletins were goldmines of fascinating information.

The Prime Minister in 1958 was Harold Macmillan and it was he who opened the eight-mile stretch of motorway at 11.00am on 5th December. Guests at the opening were conveyed on a tour of the motorway on, as the bulletin tells us "4 of our [Ribble] new 72 seater double deckers" I wonder if the drivers vied to be first on the motorway? If so they were thwarted. That accolade goes to Sid Patterson who on 8th October took a party, including the Minister of Transport, Harold Watkinson, on an inspection tour. "This is quite an historic moment", declared the minister "We were in the first passenger vehicle to ever drive over Britain's first motorway". And so Driver Sid Patterson and his steed Ribble 940 (a truly local vehicle, Leyland Royal Tiger with Blackpool-built Burlingham Seagull body) earned their unique place in history.

But these travellers were not fare paying "excursionists". The first opportunity the general public had to experience coach travel on the motorway came later on the opening day. The Bulletin tells us that at 2.30pm "Our [Ribble] coaches were leaving North Road Coach Station fully loaded with people anxious, on this sunny December day,

to be among the first to travel on Britain's first motorway". Right back to the early days of the twentieth century, the versatility of charabancs and coaches has always enabled quick thinking operators to offer tours that appeal to the adventurous, but who in 2007 would class a coach ride down the M6 as an adventure? It should, however, be remembered that the speed limit for PSVs at that time was a mere 30 m.p.h. and the motorways were being introduced with no maximum speed limit at all, and of course car ownership was much less universal than today.

The Bulletin does not fail to appreciate the role played by Mr. Cox, the Private Hire and Tours Superintendent. In 1958 excursion and tours were still operated under authority of road service licences and someone at Ribble had the foresight not only to organise the tour but to apply to the Traffic Commissioners, in time, to have the necessary tour added to Ribble's licence - Mr Cox is singled out in the Bulletin as the person with this foresight.

And so by the very kind services of the members of the Ribble Enthusiasts Club, particularly Mike Yates, I have fitted another piece into my personal quest to record a history of Excursions and Tours. I have satisfied my curiosity - or have I? So often questions answered lead to more unanswered questions; how many coaches ran on this first tour, how many people travelled, as an experienced motorway driver - the only one in the country - did Sid Patterson have a another "first" to add to his C.V.? The questions go on, but one thing we do know is that Ribble were smitten by the desire to be first. Almost a year later, the opening of the M1 at Luton saw a Ribble "Gay Hostess" double deck coach join a suitably adorned Leyland Super Comet lorry to be the first on this stretch of motorway - but that is another tale to tell.

Book Reviews

☐ **A, B, C AND M – ROAD NUMBERING REVEALED**
Andrew Emmerson and Peter Bancroft
Capital History ISBN 978-185414-307-5
94 pp, glossy paperback, £7.95

The minute I saw the title of this book in Mark Senior's catalogue I knew I had to have it. My good wife stalled, stonewalled and stayed silent. She had seen it and ordered a copy several months before, to give me for Christmas. How easily we could have ended up with two copies!

It says much for the readability of the book that I was through it well before the end of my Christmas break. It led me on, page after page, just like a fast flowing novel by a best-selling author.

I enjoyed *A, B, C and M* because I am one of those people who always like to know the meaning and origins of names and numbers. In pursuit of "the joy of numbers" the authors travel deep into a largely uncharted and undisclosed realm to give the history and many details of

Britain's road numbering system. Most road users will be aware of A roads, B roads and motorways, but how many know about C roads, D roads, E roads, H roads, L roads, N roads, T roads, U roads, V roads, X roads, trunk roads, arterial roads, sub-arterial routes, parkways, and semi-motorways? All are in the book.

For Peter Bancroft the road to knowledge was no easy drive down a fast motorway. Material about the origin of Britain's road numbers was not easy to find. Little or no information had been published, and routine destruction of old files meant that only a limited amount of historic data had been retained by officialdom. The only way to find the answers was to consult such original papers as had been preserved in the National Archives.

Road numbers had appeared in Britain as early as the Third Century AD. So by way of introduction the book gives a brief history of Britain's roads from the time of the prehistoric trackways, to the Roman road network, its destruction and decay in the Dark Ages, a limited revival

of repair and maintenance in the Middle Ages, changes of responsibility in Tudor times, the improvements brought about by the turnpike system, the advent of the County Councils in the nineteenth century and the quantum leap made essential in the twentieth by the advent of the motor vehicle, leading belatedly to the construction of the motorways.

Highways legislation goes back to the Statute of Winchester dated 8 October 1285. A long string of Acts of Parliament through the centuries gives evidence of the strength and persistence of government interest. Nevertheless, it was not until 1914 that work started on the current classification and numbering system. The purpose was twofold: to provide a mechanism for determining priorities for government grants for improvements and new construction; and to help motorists find their way on the longer journeys made possible by the advent of the internal combustion engine. The new system went into use in 1923.

The book explains the numbering system, based on the six major zones, 1 to 6, radiating in clockwise order from London and three, 7 to 9, from Edinburgh, which remains in use 85 years on. The story of the motorways is given. There are sections on road numbers in London, Milton Keynes, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Isle of Wight, the Scilly Isles, the Orkney and Shetland Islands, the Western Isles, and the Channel Islands. There is a chapter on missing numbers and anomalies.

The book is liberally illustrated with period photographs – my favourite is the crowded street scene on page 42 with a Leyland TD1 and STLs in the foreground, trams and a mix of other horse-drawn and motor traffic. There are maps, road signs, drawings, a diagram and several tables and schedules.

There is a short glossary of highway terminology, bibliography and index.

In my opinion, at £7.95 the book is good value. Writing this notice has brought back so many personal memories that I have gone on to produce "Recollections of a Roadman" published elsewhere in this *Newsletter*.

Paul Jefford

☐ BRS PARCELS SERVICES AND THE EXPRESS CARRIERS

Gordon Mustoe, Arthur Ingram and Robin Pearson
Roundoak Publishing, Nynhead, Somerset
ISBN 978-1-871565-49-2
304 pages, 615 photographs, £34.50

This eagerly awaited volume carries on the theme from the authors' previous book, *BRS – The Early Years*, in examining different elements of the nationalised British Road Service undertaking administered by the Road Haulage Executive under the direction of the British Transport Commission created as a consequence of the 1947 Transport Act. The book not only looks at the creation, administration and functioning of the BRS Parcels section but also reveals some of the historical background of major carriers such as Pickfords, Carter Paterson, Suttons, Fisher Renwick, Bouts, and Holdsworth &

Hanson that were brought together to operate under the BRS umbrella.

The 1953 Transport Act and the effects of denationalisation saw reorganisation into BRS (Parcels) Ltd. from January 1955 and it continued evolving, changing, contracting until, under the auspices of the National Freight Corporation to become Roadline. In 1997, in its final form, it became the subject of a management buyout emerging as Lynx Express Parcels. The final chapter in its history was written in 2005 when the company was bought from Bridepoint Capital by United Parcel Service Inc.

Also examined in the book is the evolution of the U.K. parcel carrier industry and key players in the post-nationalisation era and those organisations that now dominate the industry in this era of globalisation, international parcels and logistics. Running coterminous with this story is another, that of the evolution of the carriers' vehicle, the depots from which they function and the aids and systems that have been developed to ease but not minimise what is, and will always remain, an industry with a man-handling function at the core of its operation. It is profusely illustrated throughout with 20th Century views of vehicles and depot operations.

This is a very well written book, beautifully illustrated and should grace the bookshelves of any road transport historian with an interest in this segment of the freight market.

Chris Hogan

☐ BOLTON CORPORATION TRANSPORT

Harry Postlethwaite
Venture Publications Ltd, Glossop
ISBN 1905 304 165 160 pages, £17.95

This title lends itself admirably to the Super Prestige treatment in the publisher's series in which it is no. 13. Bolton possessed a major place in the Lancashire textile industry and the town came to operate the largest bus fleet in the county behind the cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Salford. Indeed, South Lancashire contained the greatest concentration of municipal passenger transport operators in the country and Bolton was at the centre.

The book commences with the council's construction of horse tramway, in partnership with neighbouring authorities, to be leased to an operating company. Following the usual pattern, under the Tramways Act of 1870, Bolton took over the horse tramway in 1899 while preparations for electric traction were made. The early operation of horse and electric tramways is covered with details of the rapid succession of general managers until the appointment of John Barnard in 1913. He was to serve until 1938 (not 1936 as stated in the caption on p. 34). Early trials with a motor bus (1904), a steam bus (1907) and a petrol-electric bus (1908) proved unsuccessful and it was the end of 1923 before motor bus operation began in earnest with Leyland single deckers (C7 according to the PSV Circle, C5 in text on p. 43). Double deck LG1 Leviathans followed in 1926. Leyland remained the main supplier until the end. Bolton's participation in Manchester's inter-urban express services and the takeovers of Freeman's Silver Star and Tognarelli are

covered, together with appropriate illustrations. Also illustrated are Bolton's individual rarities such as the double deck AEC Q and double deck bodies built by Bromilow & Edwards. It might have been mentioned that one of the reasons for the B&E purchases was the tipping gear manufacturer's diversification and the corporation's desire to use local labour during the recession of the early 1930s.

The unusual situation of a municipality owning trolleybuses operated by and in the livery of a company is discussed in connection with the South Lancashire Transport Company's operation of Bolton's four Leyland trolleybuses on the joint route between Bolton and Leigh for 22 years from 1936. On withdrawal the four vehicles were taken for the first time to a Bolton depot where they were photographed by John Senior. This is thought to be the only photographic record of the withdrawn Bolton vehicles on home ground.

The decline of the tramway from 1933 and the consequent growth of the motor bus fleet lead to a chapter on wartime conditions. This section contains two remarkable photographs depicting a tram stuck in snowdrifts during the severe winter of 1940 (p. 75) and a two tram collision in which one tram overturned in 1941 (p. 76). Bolton was well placed for buses during the war since a modern fleet had been built up in the 1930s with a view to total tramway abandonment. This was of course postponed until the war was over and the final tram ran on 29th March 1947. A rare sight was a wartime loan to London in the shape of a Bromilow & Edwards bodied Leyland TD3c on service in Golders Green on p. 97.

Post-war developments included the arrival of Cravens bodied Crossleys until the favoured Leylands became available, and rebodging, rebuilding and body switching to a greater extent than other municipalities. Bolton's vehicle shortage came later, in 1955, when awaiting the arrival of new vehicles, and there are illustrations of buses on loan from Warrington and Wallasey Corporations and Ramsbottom UDC. While East Lancashire Coachbuilders and MCCW were the favoured body builders after Leyland ceased this activity, 1955 and 1956 saw the rare Bond bodies enter the fleet, and these are illustrated together with the Bedford/Duple committee coach.

Arthur Jackson's long tenure of 20 years as General Manager is covered as is Ralph Bennett's short term of five years before he went on to higher things in Manchester and London. Mr Bennett transformed the image of Bolton's buses with his introduction of Leyland Atlanteans, new body designs and new liveries. These presaged Manchester's innovative designs for the new "Mancunian" double deckers from 1968 onwards. There is an interesting picture on p. 134 of Mr Bennett's Bolton and Manchester designs side by side when new at East Lancashire Coachbuilders. Single deckers were few in the Bolton fleet but these, too, are shown in the new Bennett designs.

The text ends with the takeover of the Bolton fleet by the South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire Passenger Transport Executive at the end of 1969. Mr Bennett's successor as the last General Manager, Jim Batty, became Director/General Manager of SELNEC Northern Division

which included the Bolton operation. The book concludes with useful appendices covering the tram fleet, the bus fleet, wartime loans to other operators, rebodgings, bus routes, tickets and a map.

For a work of this size the book covers its subject well. There are many interesting illustrations, most with the Venture Publications hallmark of excellent reproduction, including a colour section at the back of the book. Particularly noteworthy is the colour view of Bolton town centre on the back cover. The book is warmly recommended.

Eric Ogden

☐ CAMWELL'S BIRMINGHAM, ONE MAN'S TRANSPORT PERSPECTIVE

Ed: Peter Jaques
Kithead Ltd, on behalf of The Birmingham Transport
Historical Group
ISBN 978-1-872863-13-9
112 pages, 195 photographs, £14.95

The evidence of this lively book is that William Arthur Camwell had an unerring eye for the striking picture of a Birmingham tram threading its way through the cobbled streets of that city 70 to 80 years ago. Tramcars feature in most of the photographs (there are a few buses and trains too), but never on their own – always as part of the street scene. Born in 1906, 'Cam', as he was known to his friends, lived all his life in Birmingham, except for a spell with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Indian Air Force during World War II. He spent his entire working life with the Birmingham Municipal Bank.

In this book his photographs are complemented by Peter Jaques' well researched and informative captions, which set the scene of unreconstructed Birmingham. They make the whole work meaningful for readers who know only the modern city. Both photographs and captions make this book an excellent buy not just for tramway enthusiasts, but also for anyone interested in the history of one of England's premier industrial cities.

Andrew Waller

☐ LEEDS TRANSPORT Volume 4 – 1953-1974

J. Soper
Leeds Transport Historical Society
ISBN 978-0-9510280-2-5
448 pages, 480 photographs (266 colour), £35

Another eagerly awaited publication is the fourth volume of the Society's mammoth history of road passenger transport in the city of Leeds. Volume 1 commenced with the horse buses of the 1830s going through to the close of the Victorian era and Volume 2 covered the story up to 1931. Volume 3 dealt with the period from 1932 to 1953, and in the final year of that volume, the decision was made to abandon the tramway system and Volume 4 covers the rapid decline of the tramway system up to the final closure on 7th November 1959. The replacement bus services and rolling stock and subsequent bus developments are discussed with a great deal of information on local politics and the personalities involved in the major decisions. Civic pride often emerges as a

significant factor in many of the political decisions. The book covers a period when the Leeds City Transport bus system was expanded to reach a zenith with regard to both route network and number of buses operated. The progressive ideas of General Manager Thomas Lord on the design of buses, arguably reaching a high point in the 1968 dual-doored Fleetlines, and other innovations such as an abortive Park and Ride scheme, the network of *FASTAWAY* services and the first minibus services operating through the pedestrianised Leeds shopping centre are all documented in great detail.

Your reviewer spent three of the years covered by this volume in Leeds studying at the University and he could only fault the twenty chapters and the nine substantial appendices in the most minor of details, for example the transmission details of Atlanteans 426-495. The four books covering the history of Leeds Road Passenger Transport in 1,630 pages probably represents the best-researched and most comprehensive series in our field outside of London. The best news is that the Society has now decided to extend the series with a further book to cover the period from 1974 to 1986 when the West Yorkshire PTE was in control of local bus services in Leeds.

Chris Hogan

☐ BLACKPOOL'S TRAMS, PAST & PRESENT

Steve Palmer

Venture Publications Ltd, Glossop

ISBN 13-9781 905304 22 6 1

36 pages, 217 photographs (95 colour), £25

It sounds like a statement of the obvious, that this is a "must have" book for Blackpool tram enthusiasts. The author makes no bones about describing it as "the latest of my many books about the Blackpool Tramway."

Copiously illustrated, it shows well the variety of cars that have sped along the Promenade Tramway over more than 120 years. Many of these different types are still preserved today, and feature among the colour photographs towards the end of the book.

While there is detailed description of the tramcars

themselves, and how they have developed over the years, Steve Palmer also sets out how the system has developed as a business, with the 1930s to 1950s being the most successful, because of the need for a strong fleet of trams to cover four routes in a popular seaside resort. When in 1967 a modest profit of £6,000 turned into a loss of £41,000, the future of the tramway itself came under threat. The introduction of one-man-operated cars helped to restore it to profitability, and since then there have been yet more modern cars. Today it has 46 trams available for service and another 29 stored for optional further use.

Steve Burd, Managing Director of Blackpool Transport, notes in the foreword that the concern has turned in record profits in three of the past five years, and enjoyed five of its seven most successful years ever. He added that track upgrading and renewal of the electrical substation "will by the summer of 2008 provide Blackpool's trams with the best infrastructure that they have had to run on in years."

Andrew Waller

☐ TRAMCAR ROLLING STOCK HANDBOOK

John Senior and Ian Stewart

Venture Publications Ltd, Glossop

ISBN 978 1 905304 202

96 pages, with colour photographs, £7.95

This is an excellent pocket-size handbook for anyone who wants a potted history and a colour photograph of just about every tramcar preserved at or by the National Tramway Museum at Crich. It points out that not all of the collection is housed at Crich, and exhibits are moved around from time to time to make way for new acquisitions to be restored in the workshops, a process that normally takes a couple of years. Most of the trams are from the U.K. representing more than 20 different concerns. There are also cars from New York, Johannesburg and Oporto, and one of the prize exhibits is an aged Prague tram which came to Crich 40 years ago. The two access trams, with wheelchair lifts, are both from formerly communist East Germany.

Andrew Waller



Brewer's Dray

Dave Bubier writes: Taken in 1960 for no better reason than that, even then, it appeared very antiquated, was this shot of a brewery dray of Shepherd Neame of Faversham. The Albion GKL594 appears to date from 1939 or 1940 and so could have told a few tales by the time it was withdrawn and sold shortly after the photo was taken, or so an enquiry to the brewery transport department at the time revealed. Brewery fleets often had extended lives and featured models that had ceased to be a common sight. Shepherd Neame continued to run steam wagons until well after World War II.

Speeding Charabancs give way to Speeding Motor Coaches

TONY NEWMAN

Reading the very useful article by David Grimmett in *Newsletter 52*, page 24, reminded me that I had seen a file on a similar subject at The National Archives (TNA). This takes us on to the time when the speed limit for omnibuses and coaches was raised from 12 to 20 m.p.h. Under S.R. & O 1928 No.614 (The Heavy Motor Car (Amendment) Order 1928), this officially came into effect on 1st October 1928, provided the vehicles were fitted with pneumatic tyres.

The steps by which this came about are unusual and are to be found in a Home Office file (TNA Reference HO 45/14244), not a Ministry of Transport document as might be expected. The file opens with an extract from *Modern Transport* dated 21st April 1928 containing a test report on a Vulcan 'Brisbane' 32-seater chassis intended for export to Australia, although the report mentions that similar vehicles by the same manufacturer were popular in the Staffordshire Potteries. The journal's regular test route was taken through Surrey and the report states that along Purley Way a speed of 45 m.p.h. was easily attained and did not drop below 36 m.p.h. on the climb towards Croydon Airport. The ascent of the famous Succombs Hill, which featured in this route, failed on the first attempt, but only because the change from first to second gear could not be made quickly enough. An incidental marker was established here since this was the first time a vehicle had failed in this way.

The Town Clerk of Brackley chanced to read this report and immediately wrote a letter to the Metropolitan Police drawing their attention to this test. When consulted, the Ministry of Transport felt that it was up to the police to prosecute but on this occasion, the matter was raised at a meeting of chief constables. In this way, the file became rooted at the Home Office. On 12th July 1928, the chief constables heard how recent statistics showed that motor omnibuses and coaches were involved in proportionately double the number of accidents compared with other classes of road vehicles. It was demonstrated that many schedules call for buses on long distance runs to average 26 m.p.h. and often to require very much higher speeds on certain sections of route. Proceedings against the operators for constructing schedules that require these high speeds (and therefore potentially "aiding and abetting the offence") had so far failed because they had always advertised the times as "approximate".

The new regulation quoted above was therefore issued on 10th September 1928 with an accompanying letter from John Anderson, who was then Under Secretary of State at the Home Office. He suggested that concerted action would be necessary by local police forces to bring speeds down and to consider proceedings against operators. A prompt response from West Riding Constabulary stated that they proposed to use fast cars to catch vehicles exceeding the speed limits. This news was picked up by the press and published under the heading of "Speed Cops", prompting a civil servant at the Home Office to note in the margin that this was "an unpleasant American term".

A test case of an incident earlier in 1928 reached the Lord

Chief Justice who ruled on 16th November 1928. He said that according to the time advertised for a motor coach from London to Plymouth and the time actually occupied for the journey, an average speed exceeding 18 m.p.h. was maintained. The vehicle had been found to be travelling at 25 m.p.h. for parts of the journey. The Lord Chief Justice decided that the respondents did "counsel and procure their driver to offend as he did"; therefore, the case was referred to the Justices to convict. The hearing was concluded at Brentford on 6th December 1928 and a fine of £1 imposed.

The file contains a table of average speeds required from scheduled motor coaches on long journeys in 1928. The four highest averages were:

London to Leeds via Doncaster, Huddersfield
and Bradford – 27.2 m.p.h.
London to Leeds via Bradford – 25.5 m.p.h.
London to Norwich – 25.1 m.p.h.
London to Torquay – 24.0 m.p.h.

A deputation from the railway companies attended Col. Ashley, the Minister of Transport, on 22nd October 1928. The railway officers felt that the new speed limits were unenforceable and therefore the railways would consider running their own coaches in competition. Col. Ashley explained that the main purpose behind the regulations was to encourage a greater proportion of coaches to be fitted with pneumatic tyres.

The file noted another case involving a Ribble driver who appeared before Warrington County Petty Session on 21st November 1928 for driving a bus on the Liverpool to Manchester non-stop service at 31 m.p.h. The driver stated that his company timetable allowed 2 hours for the 36 miles and one third of the distance was on tram-lined streets.

During the latter part of 1928 and the early months of 1929, the Metropolitan Police Public Carriage Office compiled a summary of the number of cases of buses and motor coaches recorded for speeding offences. They identified five locations with the worst average levels of speeding as follows:

North Circular Road	31 m.p.h. for pneumatic tyred buses
Great North Road	28 m.p.h. for solid tyred buses, 31 m.p.h. for pneumatic tyred buses
Hampton Court Road	35 m.p.h. for pneumatic tyred coaches
Great West Road	34 m.p.h. for pneumatic tyred coaches
Fore Street Edmonton	34 m.p.h. for pneumatic tyred coaches

There were no cases of solid tyred coaches offending in this respect, so it appears that the strategy of the new regulations was effective to some extent. The file concludes this interesting record with the fact that

margins would be allowed by police officers before summonses were issued. Operators of buses and coaches fitted with pneumatic tyres would be summonsed if found travelling at over 25 m.p.h. The same action would be

taken with solid tyred vehicles, but in addition a caution would be given to those travelling at 16 m.p.h.

The Bells Do Sweetly Cheem - Lwoads athirt the Hill

ANDREW WALLER

Great great great grandfather John Allan, no doubt well aware of the exploits of Captain James Cook, who sailed from Whitby, chose to run away to sea instead of being a draper's apprentice in the town. He prospered in shipping and became a partner with John Chapman in a firm that later became John Allan & Sons. (Charles Dickens worked in the firm's office for a time, and family lore has it that Chapman was the inspiration for *Dombey & Son*).

John Allan's eldest son John Harrison Allan was evidently more conservative than his adventurous father. Like the good folk of Erdington and Marcq en Baroeul (page 1), he was convinced that the future lay not in steam. Sail, for him, was the way of the future. Thus, the family shipping business inevitably declined, but old John Allan held on to his Yorkshire roots; he invested in a farm at Ugglebarnby, on the moors near Whitby, which had belonged to his mother's family. Down the roundabout ways of inheritance a set of five hame bells from the farm came into my possession; the bigger ones have the initials RW cast inside the soundbow.

These are latten bells like the ones that handbell ringers use, but instead of handles they have short leather loops. We didn't know at first what hame bells were, but we came upon the village website of Aldbourne, in Wiltshire, and found the answer (www.aldbourne.org.uk). But Thomas Hardy described their use best in *The Woodlanders*, set in Dorset:

A load of oak timber was to be sent away before dawn that morning to a builder whose works were in town many miles off. The trunks were chained down to a heavy timber carriage with enormous red wheels, and four of the most powerful of Melbury's horses were harnessed in front to draw them.

The horses wore their bells that day. There were sixteen to the team, carried on a frame above each animal's shoulders, and tuned to scale, so as to form two octaves, running from the highest note on the right or off-side of the leader to the lowest on the left or near-side of the shaft-horse. Melbury was among the last to retain horse-bells in that neighbourhood; for living at Little Hintock, where the lanes yet remained as narrow as before the days of turnpike roads, these sound-systems were still as useful to him and his neighbours as they had ever been in former times. Much backing was saved in the course of a year by the warning notes they cast

ahead; moreover, the tones of all the teams in the district being known to the carters of each, they could tell a long way off on a dark night whether they were about to encounter friends or strangers.

The frame carried above the horses' shoulders was the hame box, and it was at Aldbourne that there was a foundry that cast many thousands of bells to be suspended from them. Robert Wells was the bell founder, the RW on the Ugglebarnby bells. Aldbourne historian Gordon Palmer told me that bells from the foundry have turned up as far away as Australia and Argentina, so the Yorkshire moors were scarcely exotic. Wells' foundry cast its first bells early in the 18th century. The family combined the business with corn dealing and fustian manufacture. They carried on until the 1820s, but this was a lean time for isolated country bell founders, and Robert's son James cast the last bell in 1826.

Let another Dorset poet, William Barnes, have the last words on the tuneful sounds that gave way to the klaxon horn in the 20th century:

From *The White Road up athirt the Hill*

When hot-beam'd zuns do strik right down,
An' burn our zweaty feäzen brown;
An' zunny slopes, a-lyèn nigh,
Be back'd by hills so blue's the sky;
Then, while the bells do sweetly cheem
Upon the champèn high-neck'd team,
How lively, wi' a friend, do seem
The white road up athirt the hill...

From *The Carter*

O, I be a carter, wi' my whip
A-smackèn loud, as by my zide,
Up over hill, an' down the dip,
The heavy lwoad do slowly ride...

An' I do goo vor lime, an' bring
Hwome cider wi' my sleek heäir'd team,
An' smack my limber whip an' zing,
While all their bells do gaily cheeme ...

Running down a Street Piano

Roger Benton drew our attention to this item from *The Sheffield and Rotherham Advertiser*, Friday, 21st January 1887.

At the Sheffield County Court, yesterday, before his Honour, Judge Ellison, an action was tried in which Angelo Sarons, the proprietor of a street piano, sued the Upperthorpe and Steel Bank Omnibus Company for £16 damages occasioned by the negligence of one of the company's drivers. Mr. W.E. Clegg appeared for the plaintiff: Mr. Ellison (instructed by Messrs. Smith, Smith and Elliott) for the defendant. There was a considerable muster of the organ-grinding fraternity, and the case excited considerable interest amongst others in court, the interest being heightened by the fact that the plaintiff could not speak English, and one of his compatriots had to act as interpreter. The plaintiff's case was that on the night of 30th October, about half-past nine, he was with a companion, playing the piano in Trippet lane, when the Steel bank omnibus, coming down the lane, caught the plaintiff's cart and upset the piano, the result being that the shaft of the piano cart was broken, and the piano sustained "severe internal injuries." The piano had to be sent to London for repairs, and the plaintiff's claim was made up of £13.6s.6d for the repairs, 18s.6d for carriage, 4s.6d for the broken shaft, and £1.10s.6d for temporary loss of employment. According to plaintiff and his witnesses, the piano was drawn up close to the footpath

on the offside of this road as the 'bus was then going, and there was ample room for the 'bus to pass, as well as plenty of light from the Red Lion public-house and neighbouring shops.

Antonio Botta, the manufacturer to whom the piano was sent for repair was examined at some length as to the nature of the "internal injuries," and explained that as the piano was being played at the time of the accident the damage was increased, many of the pegs in the barrel being broken. He estimated the value of the organ before the accident at £9, and after the repairs at £25, because a new set of tunes was put in, but he said it would have cost as much to put in the old tunes, as the barrel was unrepairable. The defendant's case was that there was no negligence on the part of the driver, who was exercising due caution, in a dark and narrow thoroughfare, and that the plaintiff and his companion were guilty of negligence, it being alleged that they moved the piano after the fore part of the 'bus had passed, so that the shaft of the piano-cart caught the hinder panel of the 'bus. The driver and conductor the 'bus were called, but his Honour held that the plaintiff's version of the accident was conclusively proved, and that the only question was one of damages. The evidence being that the value of the damaged organ was only £9, he considered that the damages claimed were too high, and gave judgment for £10.15s with costs.

Wain in North Wales

What follows was first published in the Omnibus Society's Provincial Historical Research Group Newsletter for April-June 2004. In it, Ken Swallow reviewed a 1971 novel by John Wain and posed the question: why did the author choose the imaginary operations of a fictitious North Wales independent bus operator for the theme of his story? The book first appeared in hardback but later came out in 1974 under a Penguin imprint – and later featured as a BBC radio play.

Amongst the novels of the Stoke-on-Trent poet, critic and novelist, John Wain, was *A Winter in the Hills*, written in 1971 and set in North Wales in an imaginary world of local independent bus operators.

The hero, Roger Furnivall, comes to "Caerfenai" from London, intending to add Welsh to his scholarly armoury so that he can enhance his prospects of a job at the University of Uppsala, with its large department of Celtic studies. After his first, unsuccessful, sexual conquest, and by now rain soaked, he joins a group of people in a bar parlour in one of the villages above the town, where he tries to dry out. He returns to "Caerfenai" on a bus driven by one Gareth. In due course, to help absorb the local Celtic culture, he takes a conducting job on Gareth's bus service, and this soon gets him involved in the petty tyranny and intrigue of the plot in the shape of the activities of rival bus operator, Dic Sharp. He finds himself, both as a freelance lover and an upholder of good

against evil, on the boundaries of the local social life but deeply involved in degrees of competitive aggression between the operators that even real life deregulation would not have envisaged.

The characters are drawn from a variety of sources. They move in an imaginary world but one that we can readily summon up. But how imaginary is it? The transport historian will engage his own imagination. Caernarfon we can certainly identify as the author's "Caerfenai". But could we also imagine the hill villages of Rhostryfan, or perhaps Rhosgadfan? And can we imagine Gareth as a dramatic representation in miniature of Silver Star Motors or Express Motors? Do we even get a glimpse of Crosville, based in distant England? Or is this all letting our own imagination run away with itself?

We must inevitably wonder from whence came the author's inspiration for *A Winter in the Hills*. The story is of course complete fiction and has sufficient dramatic licence to mislead anyone using it as a basis for a study of the road service licensing system or to enhance their vehicle recording. But there must be some reason for the author locating it where he did, and for choosing a subject that does not usually make the ingredients for a novel that sets out to champion the weak over the strong.

The son of a dentist, Wain was born in 1925 in Stoke-on-

Trent and educated at Newcastle-under-Lyme Grammar School, before going on to St John's College, Oxford. From 1949 to 1955 he lectured in English at Reading University and was Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford from 1973 to 1978. For most of his life he was a freelance journalist and author, writing and reviewing for newspapers and the radio. He won the Whitbread Award in 1982 for one of his novels. He died in Oxford in 1994.

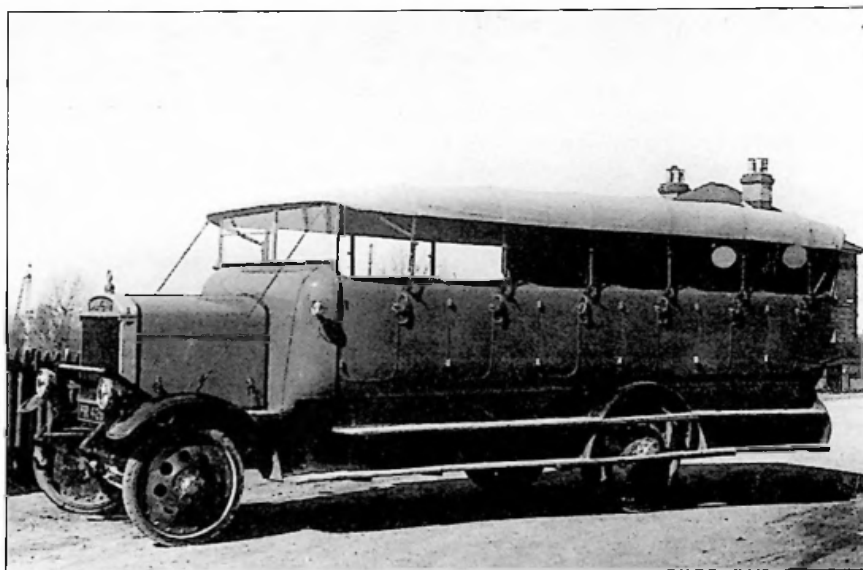
Was he, perhaps in his student days, a conductor on a bus service from one of the hill villages down into Caernarfon? His love of Caernarfon and the Lleyn peninsula was known – but what aroused his interest in the buses? Who knows!

[Since this was first published, Ken has been in correspondence with Dr Krishna Kumar, retired Professor in the Department of English at Marwari College in India, who 25 years or so ago wrote a thesis evaluating the works of John Wain. Dr Kumar comments that, although Wain is not a Wordsworth or a Dickens, he has presented in this novel "by sheer imagination a slice of life of a bus operator in North Wales". He says: "An artist always lives in Dreamland but unconsciously cannot part with subjective instincts". But – he cannot explain Wain's particular inspiration for A Winter in the Hills.]

A Wiltshire Charabanc

Andrew Waller writes: During World War I soldiers from across the British Empire were trained and billeted on Salisbury Plain before leaving for the trenches in France and Flanders. In the village of Durrington, near Stonehenge, two local men had started their own bus operations in 1914. Mark Ranger & Sons' Stonehenge Motor Services and Charles Haines' Charlie's Car conveyed villagers to market and soldiers to town.

Business was obviously good enough for a new rival to appear on the scene in 1919, Archibald James Corp (always known as Arthur), who teamed up a year later with Thomas C. Bannister to form B&C Motor Services. Tom Bannister's son John, who still lives in Salisbury, made available these two photographs of his father's charabanc. Like many such vehicles, its chassis – a Thornycroft J



(chassis no. 6017) - came from the War Department. It was registered HR4267 in April 1921 and bodied locally, possibly at the Wilton Road premises of Salisbury Carriage Works. This was one of three or four small coachbuilders who flourished in the cathedral city and neighbouring Wilton in the years after World War I.



John Bannister said his father was born in 1898, enlisted in the army at Farnborough in February 1917, but was discharged in April 1918 with a heart murmur. He was described as a motor proprietor when he married in 1919, and in 1920 *Kelly's Directory* listed Bannister & Corp as motor omnibus proprietors at Durrington. Tom Bannister stands beside the charabanc, with its canvas roof folded back and a full load of trippers aboard. His wife and daughter are sitting at the front.

Besides their regular market day bus services to Salisbury and Devizes,

B&C ran school contracts in Bulford and excursions from Salisbury, which were the subject of objections by firms based in the city. John Bannister said they did good business by transporting the Royal Artillery band around the country, and this contract was a big factor in the decision to have more than one vehicle. By 1925 there four departures a day to Salisbury (two on Sundays), but Tom Bannister found he was doing most of the driving, while Corp stayed in the office. This did not suit Bannister, so he left the partnership by early 1926 to join his father's newsagent's business in Durrington.

By then Corp was living at 1 Highbury Avenue, Salisbury, so he was the only active proprietor when Wilts & Dorset bought out B&C for £400 in April 1927, taking over its Bulford-Durrington-Salisbury service, together with a garage at Bulford. Two ex-B&C vehicles, a Berliet and a Chevrolet, maintained the service "on a mileage basis" for Wilts & Dorset until it acquired suitable new vehicles. Corp himself became the company's traffic superintendent, and when it started operations in Andover he was put in charge of them.

The Gyrobus

In the mid-1950s the Swiss engineering company Oerlikon invented and built the gyrobus; 27 of these vehicles ran for a time in the Swiss town of Yverdon. Belgium too showed an interest; from 1955 to 1959 three more of these novel machines ran between the city of Ghent and Merelbeke. Externally they looked like conventional buses but for three short trolley booms mounted on the roof. Another 17 gyrobuses were set to work in what was then Leopoldville, capital of the Belgian Congo – today's Kinshasa, where they kept going until 1960.

Line poles with three stud contacts were installed at fixed points along the roadside. The triple trolley booms were raised from the gyrobus roof to connect with the three stud contacts, and drew three-phase current to power an

electric motor. This set a flywheel spinning, which in turn powered a generator producing regular direct current to power the traction motors.

Predictably, the system's main drawback was that the gyrobus had to reach the next power pole before the flywheel slowed down too much. Often the vehicle did not reach the feeder pole in time because of traffic congestion, so the experimental design was pursued no further.

Adapted from "Attention au Chemin de Fer Vicinal – Musée du Tram, Schepdaal", (Transport Publishing Company, Glossop, in conjunction with the Schepdaal Tramway Museum, 1974)

New Lease of Life for a Former Milk Float

ROGER DE BOER

Whilst perusing the *Birmingham Mail* one March Saturday, I was intrigued to find that there was a feature on Stirchley builders' merchants Harris. When they were builders, they had built my English grandmother's house in 1938. They were now in the news for taking the initiative by buying a battery electric vehicle to be used for local deliveries.

Photographs accompanied the article and the registration of the ex-float could be seen to be WFD949X. This meant the vehicle was either ex-Dudley Co-op or Unigate – more likely the latter, and if so, would most likely be upon a Wales and Edwards chassis.

One of the photos in the newspaper was taken at speed and the other was a rear view, preventing identification of the wheel hubs, so I decided to visit Harris at Charlotte Road, Stirchley. They had moved into the former TASCOS (Ten Acres and Stirchley Co-operative Society) premises many years ago and they had now been using the float for 12 months. I was surprised to discover that the vehicle was running on Morrison axles but pleased to read that its tax disc indicated it to be a W. & E. chassis, thus pointing to Unigate as its original owner. (When the Co-op was at Charlotte Road six electric vehicles were outstationed

there for charging, including the float that delivered to my home at Northfield, but the bulk of the dairy fleet was charged and housed at Umberslade/Ribblesdale Roads, two streets away from the Charlotte Street garage).

WFD949X had not come to Harris from Unigate directly, however. The previous owner had been a seaside resort which had run the lorry as a pick-up truck minus its roof, and by this time it had in any case been rebuilt by Electricars of Atherstone, Warwickshire. The style of its new cab was designated M. & M. after the two Mason brothers who had worked for Birmingham Co-op, but later set up on their own refurbishing electric vehicle chassis by fitting a kit body. So successful did they become they were to absorb Crompton of Tredegar; when they marched in they found £56,000 in the safe.

From my own photographic records I find I had photographed the float in 1983 and 1984 when it was allocated – presumably new – to Unigate's Woodgate depot. Thus after its travels the wheel has turned full circle, for Stirchley is but seven miles from Woodgate – a distance easily achieved on a single charge, and floats from that depot still serve Stirchley, albeit Express/Arla vehicles today.