

SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB

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One of the nicest customers you could have – Bent Stage.

This story starts with an ex-Shelvoke & Drewry apprentice, Colin Pierson, who lived with his parents in Ickleford near Letchworth Garden City. When Colin had completed his apprenticeship he met and married a Danish lass, Vibeka, left the UK and settled down in Odense, the third largest city in Denmark, and the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen. Colin met Bent Stage and they became friends. When Bent was looking for a refuse collection vehicle Colin suggested S&D as a supplier. Colin phoned and told his mother about this and Mrs. Pierson duly went along to the SD offices in Icknield Way and in reception asked for details of SD vehicles. Now, normally such an approach would have been ignored, but then Vic Beckwith, at that time Assistant Export Sales Manager, got in touch with Colin who introduced Bent. Colin was deemed as SD's representative in Denmark, and translated for Bent the SD specs Bent suggested he wanted – prices were kept competitive and number one was ordered. This will have been some time in the early 1970's and the first order was for an NY Revopak. The 'N' series was introduced in 1972 and remained in production until superseded by the 'P' series in 1978. The three photos below show the handing over of the first vehicle.



The centre photo shows L to R :- Vic Beckwith SD assistant Export Sales Manager, Tom Hall Export Sales Manager, Bent Stage and Colin Pierson.



I've discovered this story because:-

- (a) In March 2020 Christian Stage, who is pictured left, requested to join the Enthusiasts' Club Facebook Group and then posted a number of photos.
- (b) Malcolm Bates responded to a email from me asking for information about the photos. He took the three photos featured above outside No. 2 Factory in Blackhorse Road.
- (c) Malcolm forwarded my email to Vic Beckwith who filled in the story, and gave details of the part he played in this story.



This photo, captioned 1981, would suggest that Bent Stage purchased at least three 'N' types and two 'P' types.

Vick Beckwith has written:- “I made regular visits to Bent in Odense, and note that Bent didn’t speak English, nor I Danish, but we became good friends, based on Colin Pierson acting as translator, and quantities of beer and Dansk bitters (or some concoction !) In order to pacify “union representatives” in Bent’s business, evening meetings would be held in Odense on a gardening allotment in the said union guy’s “shed” – Bent would always be the last one standing!! Bent Stage was one of the nicest customers you could have, and sadly I’m aware he passed away before his time, but his memory has stayed with me.”

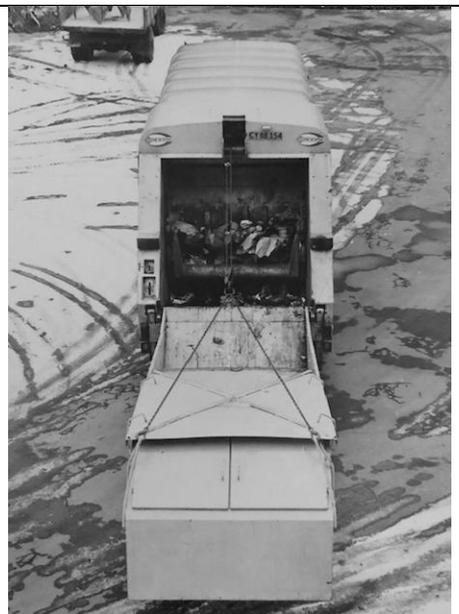
Bent came up with the idea of an NT Revopak of 22 tons gross weight, fitted with a Boughton hydraulic winch so that 12 cubic yard containers could be tipped into the hopper. Malcolm Bates was on hand to photograph this vehicle in Icknield Way when it was completed and handed over to Bent.



[From the position of the driver’s rear view mirror this vehicle is clearly left hand drive. Strangely the TY on page1 is right hand drive. It was in 1967 that Denmark, Sweden and Norway changed from driving on the left to driving on the right.]

Only a total of 20 NT’s were manufactured and Malcolm Bates suggests that this one was late 1970’s. Malcolm did a lot to publicise the vehicle which he considers was :- “one of the most impressive SD refuse collectors ever built.”

A photograph of the vehicle at work appears as a two page spread in Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry (caption 153) and is shown on Page 3. Malcolm also considers that as a loyal customer Bent was unfairly treated by SD with increased prices and delayed deliveries. Vic Beckwith agrees with this but notes that such treatment didn’t just apply to Bent Stage – it was normal at that time.



Two views of the NT Revopak at work.

In March 1981 Bent Stage celebrated twenty-five years in business. The photo shows Bent with his wife, Michella, and their sons Christian (the younger) and Anders. Christian describes Michella as “my lovely mother.” Vic Beckwith says of Michella :-
 “a lovely natured person who always made one feel welcome because Bent’s main office for SD business was “his kitchen” and Michella the host.”

Christian also sent in photos of a valued copy of Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry. The 1980 book is signed by the co-authors, Bill Negus of SD and Nick Baldwin. It bears the inscription:-

To our good friend and first Danish customer, Bent Stage.

Signed:- **VC Beckwith** (Assistant Export Sales Manager)

Colin Robinson (Export Sales office)

Tom Hall (Export Sales Manager)





Kenneth Pedersen, also from Odense, Denmark, posted this photo on the Facebook page :- Fynske vognmænd. This fleet of nine 'N' types were operated by the Odense Renovation Company, another Danish customer.

I have to sincerely thank Christian Stage for posting the photographs used here and supplying information about his father's company and its connection with Shelvoke & Drewry. Also Kenneth Pedersen for the above photo. Thanks also to former SD employees Malcolm Bates , Publicity Manager, (at SD 1969 – 1983 whose duties included photography) and Victor Beckwith, Assistant Export Sales Manager (at SD 1969 – 1991).

Vic Beckwith remarks "At the end of the day none of the above, Bent with SD, would have happened without Colin Pierson, who did all the groundwork and made it possible."

Brian Carpenter.

Hon. Secretary the SD Enthusiasts' Club.