



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 2. Issue No. 38.

Summer 2020.

From the Editor.

In these extraordinary days in which we are living, I hope the regular appearance of this Newsletter will be welcome. We have the usual mixture of topics many of which relate to SD vehicles. But we also have memories of those who worked for the company. Such accounts are always welcome, and if anyone finds they have extra time on their hands, please do write in. Page 4 has welcome news of a new book about the company in which we all share an interest.

Brian Carpenter Editor 1st June 2020.



Last month Christian Stage sent via Facebook a fascinating set of photos of the SD vehicles purchased by his father, Bent Stage, from Odense, Denmark. With the assistance of Malcolm Bates and Vic Beckwith I found the story behind these photos and produced a Newsletter Extra (No. 3.) which I published at the end of April. The photo above shows the NT Revopak.

streets in their town. On these smaller ones the SD logo, was replaced by a sign that said: BRM. That was meant for Bekker Reinigings Machines, (translates as Bekker Cleansing Vehicles.) Some people gave it another name, British Race Monster.!"

Exports to the Netherlands.

The account of these exports to Denmark reminded Roger Morrisroe of a problem encountered when SD first tried to export to the Netherlands. I copied his email to Jaap Mikkers from Zwolle, Netherlands, who replied:- "Mr. Morrisroe is right. SD was the name of the Sicherheits Dienst, the German Security Department.



I think the Bekker company sold around 75 Revopak units in this small country. Most of them were bodies fixed mainly on DAF chassis, but also on Mercedes and Bedford chassis. Only the narrow track (N series) was a totally SD vehicle; which they sold to 5 or 6 with small

This photo shows a Revopak on a DAF chassis in Zwolle and was sent in by Jaap Mikkers.

That reminds me ...

Some reflections from **Malcolm Bates** on reading Newsletter Extra No.2. (February 2020)

Remembering that Harry Shelvoke and James Drewry both worked at Lacre Lorries (the name was derived from Long and Acre, site of the original works in London, before the move to Letchworth), it's amazing to think that they were able to drum-up enough finance to not only start their own company, employing local people, from scratch, but have a brand new factory in which to build an entirely new design of vehicle in, isn't it?

Imagine two young British entrepreneurs being able to do that today without importing components from America, Germany or China!

What is also amazing is that not only did the directors of Lacre make a huge mistake in rejecting James

Drewry's ideas to produce the Freighter, they also literally took the company down the wrong street in sticking with the mechanical road sweeper rather than add further new product lines.

This was doubly amazing in that just a few years before the move to Letchworth, [in 1910] Lacre was still a major manufacturer of 'subsidy' type 4 ton lorries to the British Army, alongside Dennis, AEC and Leyland. The other three all did better than Lacre in the 1920s. Had Lacre taken on production of the Freighter, things may have been different.



I was reminded of this sad decline of an historic brand by (a) memories of the once-beautiful 'Arts and Crafts' Lacre factory in Works Road, when I first came to work at S&D in the early 70s and (b) more recently looking at the remains of a Lacre roadsweeper rescued by Peter Johnston in Northern Ireland.

Although dating from the early 1930s, the entire front end, steering and engine/transmission look exactly like those of a WW1 Lacre Army lorry - right down to the dash-mounted petrol tank with gravity feed!



The Lacre Motor Car Company factory in Works Road, Letchworth. Photo:- © The Garden City Collection.

In other words, it seems that technical progress wasn't high on the agenda at Lacre, so 'the young guns' Shelvoke and Drewry decided to go it alone. There is no trace of the Lacre factory in Letchworth today - sadly, the Garden City Corporation (predecessor of the 'Heritage Foundation') had it demolished. But then, there is precious little of the SD factory left either - just the last office building built (including my office/studio on the third floor) and a WW2 air raid shelter in what was the works yard.

This lack of interest in our industrial heritage has resulted in someone recently suggesting in a magazine that the Freighter was electrically-powered. In all the time I've spent looking through the factory photograph books, that's the one thing that I've never seen.

Although had SD still been alive today it would surely be on the agenda?



SD FREIGHTERS FOR COMMERCIAL WORK. Part 5. Chassis Details.

This part of the series based on a photo copy of a brochure, believed to be from around 1926, concentrates on the chassis and as previously there are additions to the text which are shown in *italics*. The photo is also an addition although a similar photo appears later in the brochure.



Standard Chassis Sizes.

Freighters can be supplied for varying loads, and in order to ensure the correct distribution of weight, it is essential to vary the wheelbase for a given body length, with the load on the chassis frame. In the table which follows, this is referred to as the frame load, and includes the weight of the body. The chassis to be chosen for given nett load depends on this factor, which is always considered when submitting a quotation.

The chassis to carry frame loads of 70 cwt. and 80 cwt. are always fitted with wide wheels and twin tyres to the rear axle, those of smaller capacity may have twin tyres if these are required. The radii given are measured to the outside of the front wheel.

Frame Loads and Body Lengths.

Wheel-Base	Turning Radius	50 cwt.	60 cwt.	70 cwt.	80 cwt.
Ft. in.	Ft. in.	Ft. in.	Ft. in.	Ft. in.	Ft. in.
6 0	10 3	9 0	10 0	-	-
6 6	11 0	10 0	10 6	11 0	11 6
7 3	12 4	11 0	12 0	12 0	13 0
8 0	13 8	12 0	13 0	13 0	14 0
8 9	15 0	13 0	14 0	14 0	15 0
9 6	16 4	14 0	15 0	15 6	16 0
10 3	17 8	15 0	16 0	17 0	17 0
11 0	19 0	16 0	17 0	18 0	18 6
11 9	20 4	17 0	18 0	19 0	20 0
12 6	21 8	18 0	19 0	20 0	-
13 3	23 0	19 0	20 0	-	-

Chassis details

Canopy. The standard canopy or driver's cab has a roof built of ash ribs, over which are fixed tongued and grooved pine slats, varnished inside and covered outside with canvas impregnated with white lead, supported on four steel uprights. Side and back curtains of waterproof canvas can be rolled up when not required. The windscreen is of glass, in two panels. If required, a metal windscreen and rain-guard can be supplied instead of the glass windscreen. An all timber driver's cab can also be fitted.

Tipping Gear. The tipping gear is of our own manufacture and is hydraulically operated, the pump being driven from the

gearbox. A full tipping angle of over 90 degs. can be obtained in less than two minutes. Tipping gear can be fitted to Freighters with bodies up to 12 ft. long, with frame loads not exceeding 60 cwt. A brief Specification is as follows:-

Pump. Manganese bronze integral with Freighter gearbox.

No parts working except when required. All working parts of steel hardened and ground where necessary. Controlled by a simple lever within the cab.

Oil reservoir. Consists of a welded steel tank attached to the back of the engine housing ; readily accessible for refilling.

Control Valve. Casing of gunmetal, valves of steel hardened and ground. Control lever placed in driver's cab, giving three positions :- "up", "stop" and "down". Automatic stop shuts valve when maximum tipping is reached.

Ram Gear. Telescopic ram, situated below the body and carried on trunnion brackets supported upon the chassis. No possibility of side strain upon the ram : ram packing leathers are very accessible and quickly replaced. The ram propels the body radially above pivots fixed to the chassis frame.

Side Tipping. Side tipping gear can also be fitted, the general specification of this being the same, but twin rams are used instead of the single ram. This equipment is not frequently called for, as the great manoeuvring capacity of the Freighter makes the end-tipping vehicle suitable for almost all work.

Twin Tyres. As mentioned earlier, these are always fitted to the heavier models. When carrying loads of about two tons, it is sometimes useful to fit one tyre plain and one grooved to each wheel. This gives very good adhesion when working on soft ground or slippery road surfaces.

Electric Lighting. Either 6 or 12 volt electric lighting can be fitted instead of the oil lamps which are included in the standard chassis price. The standard electric lighting set comprises combined head and side lamps, tail lamp, switchbox, battery, and all necessary wiring.

Instruments. Mileometers or other recording instruments can be fitted when required.

APPRENTICESHIP MEMORIES.

I sent the photo on the right to Mick Hursey who told me that it brought back quite a few memories. It shows the First Year apprentice school that was located behind the carpenters' shop, and Mick thinks it's Doug Sparrow giving instruction at the surface table to the left of the picture with the other chap crouched down. On the top right there is rectangular label on a door, which was the entrance to the class room and Doug Sparrow's office. Mick's work station was about halfway along the benches along the right hand side, and he has memories of spending many hours filing until his wrist seized up! Photo from the late Morris Davenport's collection. From the last issue we continue Mick's account of his apprenticeship.



Mick Hursey Remembers Part 2.

The next stage is what steered my career for the rest of my working life as the next two modules I opted for were the H3 mechanical fitting and the H8 which was Vehicle fitting. This is where I really got into my stride, working on the chassis line building vehicles from the ground up, working on a selection of Forklifts in No 3 factory and then spending time with the vehicle electricians assembling and wiring dash panels and wiring complete vehicles before finally moving into the Unit Shop, which formed part of the service department in No 4 factory. The unit shop was the heart of the service department as here we rebuilt engines, gearboxes, axle assemblies and differentials, hydraulic pumps and rams etc. and these units were supplied to the service engineers that covered the entire country and in some cases the world. The Unit Shop superintendent was Ian Macfadyen and the foreman was Johnny Holt. I recall there being three apprentices that all started at the same time, Pete Naughton, Trevor Upchurch and myself.

Between us, we worked with all the different engineers in the unit shop learning many different skills from each. George Rice, Alan Pancutt, Pete Davis, Alan Peters and John Murphy are the names I can remember. During my time there I also worked in the main part of the service department fitting engines etc to the various customer vehicles but again, ashamedly I can only recall some of the people there, but those I can remember are Jack Arnold, Johnny Hill, Charlie Lawson, Lucky Campbell, Graham Lambert, Pete Lear, Gary Sugden and Sam Foster.

As part of the Service team I travelled all over the UK initially as fitters mate to the more experienced guys, but eventually on my own carrying out all manner of repairs, trouble shooting and support to the outside inspectors. Sadly, as with all things, nothing stays the same and with the Dempster takeover things were rapidly changing for S&D so I eventually moved on from S&D working in a variety of jobs covering many aspects of vehicle

engineering none of which would have been possible without the Shelvoke & Drewry apprenticeship scheme and the good people I met along the way, so I look back at my time there with a great fondness – except maybe the time when I was chained to a lamp-post outside No 4 factory before my wedding - so I apologise for not remembering everyone, and if I haven't managed to get all the names I have remembered correct, I'm sorry.

APPRENTICESHIP IN THE 1970's

Trevor Upchurch has kindly sent me a scan of his Agreement of Apprenticeship for him to commence as an apprentice on 1st September 1970 for a four year period. For 1971 it is noted that Trevor passed with credit Basic Engineering Craft Studies (City & Guilds 500/1) and was awarded City & Guilds First Year Craft Phased Test Certificate. Also the Engineering Industry Training Board First Year "Off Job" Training Certificate of Engineering. In 1973 Trevor passed with credit Mechanical Engineering Craft Studies Part II (City & Guilds 205/2) and two modules of the Engineering Industry Training Board Certificate of Craftsmanship :- H3 Mechanical fitting and H1 Machining for Toolmaking and Experimental work. He was awarded joint third prize for his third year. In 1974 Trevor passed with credit the Engineering Industry Training Board Part III (City & Guilds 205/?) and was awarded the Engineering Industry Training Board Certificate of Endorsement in Vehicle Fitting (H8)

These accounts are all very different from my own apprenticeship in the 1950's where the Indenture ran to four pages in archaic legal language and on the final page simply states:- "This is to certify that the said Apprentice has completed the within-mentioned Articles of Apprentice's Indenture to the satisfaction of the Masters." Signed F. Walker – Secretary. **Brian – Editor.**

THE EDITOR'S PAGES.

Good News in Unprecedented Times.

Malcolm Bates has notified me that he has been commissioned to write a new SD 'Bookazine' for Kelsey Publishing similar to the 'On the Dust' title he did a few years ago. He's unsure how it will look yet, but the main task will be to feature stuff that was not previously given to Nick Baldwin when he did his MH&B publication, Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry in 1980 but it will be at least 100 pages and hopefully will include at least 250 to 300 pictures all for the modest price of £8.99!

Shelvoke's Heyday.

An unnamed correspondent has written the following in *Letchworth Reflections* – memories of Letchworth 1960 to 2003.

“In Shelvoke's heyday, we had Number One factory, which was the main works in Icknield Way. Number Two factory was Blackhorse Road; Number Three factory was down by the Letchworth Power Station, next to that. Number Four factory was a service factory at the old Hands Trailer factory. Number Four factory was the Service Department. We had an engineering works at St Neots. We had two at St Neots. We had depots making parts for us in Birmingham, Manchester, Birtley in County Durham and Merthyr in Wales. They were all doing fabrication work and making parts up which were being collated into the Letchworth building to increase production.

I think as far as I can remember, if you included all those factories and all those depots in their heyday, there would have been about 1,500 people, and when we finished I think there was about 20 of us. I know in our heyday we were somewhere between a thousand and 15 hundred people in the Shelvoke's group all round, including Letchworth and surrounding areas and all round the country and we were building anything up to somewhere around 70 vehicles per month and these were all finished, delivered vehicles.”

I consulted Roger Morrisroe who told me that after No. 2 factory opened in 1960, No. 3 factory was acquired in 1965/66, I knew that No. 4 factory was taken over in 1970 and Roger said St. Neots opened in the mid 1970's. Malcolm Bates has told me that St. Neots was chosen in a vain attempt to reduce labour costs which ultimately led to SD's first strike.

Do any readers have memories that can add to this account, please?

That mystery Pak-Mor Body.

In the Spring issue of the Newsletter I featured an enquiry from Tom McWilliams about his memories of an SD with a Pak-Mor body that operated in Castlereagh in Northern Ireland. Eric Voytko, who produces Classic Refuse Trucks, advised me that Eagle did indeed sell the Pak-Mor H-series as the “Retreever” (their spelling), from the mid-1970s. He has a brochure in the CRT Library, and from this I found this photo:-



Tom McWilliams is satisfied that this is the vehicle he remembers. Shown on a Bedford chassis not an SD but never mind. An interesting story with a satisfactory ending.

What did you do in 'Lock Down'?

Suddenly finding myself at home under 'lock down'

I did something I'd had at the back of my mind to do. For all the ingenuity of the SD Model 100 Dualdrive, I still think that the Freighlifter without a cab is the more satisfying design.



That's probably because I have fond memories of when in 1952 my father took me to the Mechanical Handling Exhibition at Olympia where the new Freighlifter was on display. And I was allowed to 'operate' it!

So, the above turned into this:-



News of Surviving Vehicles.



When Michael Cooper from Maybole, Ayrshire Scotland purchased this 1964 'T' type in 2018 it was described as a 'water carrier'. Now two years later restoration is well on its way and a side loader body has been fitted.

I have been contacted by Ian Read who has provided a lot of information about the vehicle, Reg. No. 812 UUR. It was an emergency water tender supplied new to the Lee Valley Water Company based in Hatfield, Hertfordshire. It is shown below Having been repainted in 1989 ready for display at Hertfordshire County Hall when they had a display of vehicles commemorating 100 years of vehicle manufacture in Herts.



RAB 498 P 1978 SD/Carmichael Fire Tender.

This vehicle was purchased by Gary Canham in 2018. It is now at the RAF Fire Fighting Museum.

Roger Morrisroe noticed the Museum in the Daily Express.



Freightlifter on the move.



Last Summer we reported that Richard Wilson from Reddich had acquired a Model 82 Freightlifter. It is pictured above on 17th April when it was moving on to a new owner. Those Freightlifters just keep going!

NEWS.

Facebook.

During the current 'Lockdown' activity on Facebook has seen a significant increase. If you haven't yet joined our Group I think if you tried it you'll enjoy it. Our membership has now risen to 369.

The Garden City Collection.

Just before she was furloughed Aimee Flack let me know that over 130 of the photos that I'd donated to the Garden City Collection have now been catalogued and only need the scans of the photos adding. Currently if you search the collection under "Shelvoke & Drewry" 212 items appear. So when the Collection is able to open again we can expect a significant increase to that total.

Index to Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry.

In trying to help Malcolm Bates with his task of creating a Kaleidoscope Mk II (see Page 5.) I sent him as copy of the Index I created for the original book. This isn't comprehensive but has been of great assistance to me when trying to find references from the book. I'll send a copy to anyone who would like one.

THANKS. My thanks are due to the many people who are named on these pages who have made this issue possible.

The Shelvoke & Drewry Enthusiasts' Club Newsletter is published four times a year on 1st March, 1st June, 1st September and 1st December. Items for inclusion may be e-mailed to me at: [pinnerboy\[at\]btinternet.com](mailto:pinnerboy[at]btinternet.com)

Next Issue :- 1st September Autumn Issue.