



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 2. Issue No. 39.

Autumn 2020.

From the Editor.

We've another bumper six page issue for you again. On this page we report on how SD has appeared in the press recently, whilst on the back page we reveal tentative plans to celebrate S&D's Centenary in 2022. In between we have a delightful story about Christine Drewry, we explain how Crosville modified three of their Freighter buses and we continue the series about Freighters for Commercial Work. Plus our usual news stories. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Brian Carpenter Editor 1st September 2020.

THE SPECIALIST PRESS.

SD – Shelvoke & Drewry Vintage Roadscene Archive Series No. 11.

The name of Shelvoke & Drewry doesn't appear all that frequently in the Specialist Press. But during the summer no less than four publications have shown an interest in the Company.

Vintage Spirit Magazine May 2020.

Roger Mills wrote a two page article entitled: 'A Load of Rubbish' which included photos of the "1922" Freighter and the Epsom & Ewell Freighter. The magazine caters for steam and industrial heritage enthusiasts, and it was good to see the humble refuse collection vehicle described.

The PSV Circle Historic Journal June 2020.

As a follow up to his article in the March 2019 issue of this journal, Peter Tulloch kindly gave corrections that I'd requested. He also included four photos, one of which shows a very smart van body fitted to a former Tramocar Reg. No. PO 9665 which had a further life on the island of Jersey. The van body was for W. Dennis & Sons Ltd. and the work was carried out by Jersey Motor Panels.

Malcolm Bates, former SD Publicity Manager, was commissioned to write this bookazine. He kindly showed the draft of the book to your Editor and I felt I was able to correct a few misunderstandings that had crept into the text.

For commercial reasons the volume is unable to be a well researched history of the company, but I feel many SD Enthusiasts' will welcome this addition to the available literature about the company. It was published in early August.

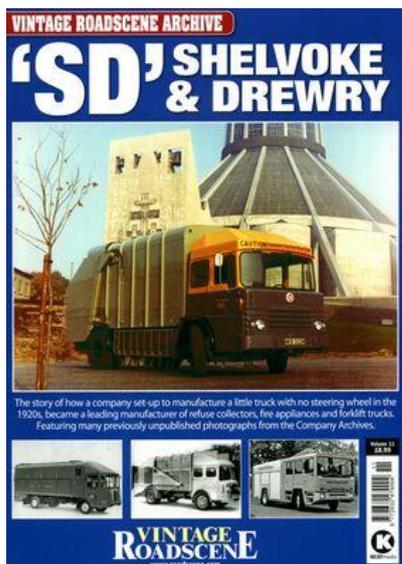


The August issue of Vintage Roadscene carried a five page article by Malcolm Bates entitled:- SD Shelvoke & Drewry – "I Really was There!"

Malcolm worked for the company from 1969 for fourteen years, and the article mainly deals with his early years at S&D. He recalls how he came to join the company after training as a Technical Illustrator and initially was producing cutaway drawings for brochures and workshop manuals. Responsibility for photography was later added to his duties and he became Publicity Manager.

Malcolm considered that the company was "behind the times" with its ideas of design, particularly in respect of vehicle cabs. Over the years his opinions haven't altered. He describes the N series cab as :- "the end result fell well short of what was required." To me it feels peculiar that he doesn't mention that the Revopak body on the N series chassis was highly successful in terms of sales, and achieved a high proportion of the U.K. market for refuse collection vehicles.

Whilst I appreciate that Malcolm has to cater for the tastes of Vintage Roadscene's readership, I was left feeling that SD's failures were given far greater prominence than their successes in the period in question. **Editor.**



WHEN CHRISTINE DREWRY VISITED THE FIRM HER FATHER FOUNDED.



When Malcolm Easton sent in the above photo it took me back to an article in the Summer 2004 issue of the SD Enthusiasts' Club Magazine (as it was then).

This event was recorded in the Comet Newspaper of February 25th 1987 as follows:-

Chris, 74, pops back to see old firm. By LOIS PRIOR

A 74-YEAR-OLD former Letchworthian made a sentimental return last week to the firm her father co-founded.

Miss Christine Drewry returned to the company that her father James and partner Harry Shelvoke founded in 1922 — Shelvoke and Drewry.

Miss Drewry left the town 60 years ago and her visit was spurred by an item in the Daily Telegraph. The Letchworth firm, now known as Shelvoke Dempster, had sponsored the newspaper's crossword one day in February.

Miss Drewry had spotted it at her home in Beaconsfield, and decided that after an absence of 60 years, it was time to get back in touch with the company.

Miss Drewry was welcomed back by the directors of the company and met by Shelvoke Dempster's long-serving employees Doug Parnwell (48 years), John Hill (43 years), Gordon Howard (41 years) and Pam Street (21 years). During her day Miss Drewry was given a tour of the modern plant in Icknield Way, and taken to see the Tiller dustcart now at the Shuttleworth Collection in Old Warden, which had been designed by her father.

"Everything has changed so much since my father's day," said Miss Drewry, "and Letchworth looks so different to what I remember!"

At the end of her busy but enjoyable day, Miss Drewry was presented with a cut glass vase by Shelvoke Dempster's director of operations, John Gill.

Malcolm told me that the actual visit took place on 19th February 1987. I contacted Pam Street to see if she could name those in the photo. Pam replied:- "Doug Parnwell is on the left and the person on the right is Ronald Farr he was Personnel Manager. As I was the longest serving female I was very lucky to spend the day with Christine we had a good day, she was a very nice and friendly person."

Pam, who worked in the Accounts Department, continued at S&D until it closed, completing 25 years' service. She met her husband, Terry, at the Company and he served 26 years in the Accounts Department.

Malcolm Easton kindly sent me a photo of the cut glass vase which is still in his possession.



The wording on one side is:

*Presented to
Miss Christine Drewry
on her visit to Shelvoke Dempster Ltd
Letchworth Garden City
19th February 1987*

On the opposite side is a shield encircled with:
LETCHWORTH FIRST GARDEN CITY

Malcolm added:- It is a very nice cut glass vase. I find this a lovely story. Ed.

THERE WERE SOME CLEVER PEOPLE AT CROSVILLE.



When this photo was pasted on Facebook it set me wondering. I'd seen the coloured photo below before, but had never thought about the vehicle depicted.

In 1950 this trio were fitted with Bedford engines and gearboxes. Prior to that they looked as shown in the photo below.



**Photo supplied by Rob Richardson and captioned:-
S&D at Harlech.**



**U 13 is shown on Rhyl promenade in this photo
supplied by Rob Richardson.**

I turned to David Kaye's article in Buses Extra No. 49 from October 1987 and learned that the North Wales feet of SD Freighters as buses amounted to thirteen vehicles. Initially operated by Brooke Bros. trading as White Rose Motor Services, who ran the first Freighter in 1926. The company was acquired by Crosville in May 1930 who in July 1938 purchased a further three Freighters with thirty-two seat toast-rack bodies by Eastern Coachworks of Lowestoft. These were registered as CFM 340, CFM 341 & CFM 342 and were numbers U12, U13 & U14 in Crosville's fleet. (Pater Kaye asks whether the 'U' stood for unorthodox?)

The body featured a curved roof, non-slip treads on the running boards and hand rails on the nearside. As with all Freighter buses from 1933 steering was controlled with a steering wheel and on these buses the driver's seat was on top of the engine and moved towards the offside.

Crosville's Freighters were stored during the Second World War but re-entered service when peace returned.

I asked Duncan Roberts for his views on how the conversion might have been carried out. Duncan replied:- "We need to look at the mechanical abilities and other work completed at Sealand Road (Chester) at the time by Crosville Motor Services. An educated and informed thought based on CMS ways and other things it did, is that all the Shelvoke mechanical units and body work was simply stripped off and the front end of a Bedford, possibly WTB or an Army surplus vehicle (of which there were many) was simply installed in its place, making whatever chassis parts were needed out of whatever was to hand or from scratch. Manufacturing a prop shaft would have been neither here nor there to the company – merely a case of measuring, checking that nothing suitable was in the stores and, if not, bidding the prop shaft person produce one and ensure the Erecting Shop Foreman knew when it/they were finished and walk it down the yard if he 'asked' that he do so."

With their Bedford engines the Freighters remained in service until 1955.

SD FREIGHTERS FOR COMMERCIAL WORK.

Part 5. Special Types.

In the series based on a photo copy of a brochure, believed to be from around 1926, we come to a section entitled "Special Types". This describes two types of demountable bodies and as previously there are additions to the text which are shown in *italics*. The photos are also an additions although a similar photo appears later in the brochure.



Freighter with demountable stillage body. Load 2 tons. Body dimensions 12 ft. 6 ins. X 5 ft. 6 ins. Prices ; chassis and canopy **£495** stillage bodies each **£45** *Photos similar to that in brochure.*

The standard Freighter chassis is capable of many uses, but we have found that there are some special services for which variations of design are useful. This is particularly the case of our chassis with demountable bodies. This equipment is designed to eliminate standing time by allowing bodies to be loaded while the chassis is working elsewhere.

Stillage Demountables. The bodies in this case are provided with legs, so that they can be left standing in a yard for loading purposes. For the best working, three bodies are generally used – one being loaded, one being unloaded, and the third on the chassis between loading and unloading points.

On the underside of the bodies are runways which, at the front, are sloped upwards. Along both sides of the chassis frame are mounted a number of rollers at a width apart to correspond with the runways under the demountable platform. The chassis is provided with automatic locking catches, which retain the body on the chassis.

Assuming that a loaded platform is standing on the ground, the chassis is backed against it until the rearmost rollers engage with the forward ends of the runways. The maximum lift provided is approximately 6 ins., and the height of the chassis when unladen is such that the rear rollers engage on the runway ramps about 1 in. to 2 ins. below their upper ends. The chassis is then driven backwards under the body, causing the springs to be compressed until the front end of the platform is lifted from the ground. The rearward motion is continued until about two-thirds of the body is over the chassis, when the rear end commences to lift. The inertia of the loaded body then enables the chassis to be backed until the body is right on and the automatic latches engaged.

To unload the platform from the chassis, the latches are first disengaged and the chassis driven forward with fairly vigorous acceleration. By this means the body is gently lowered

to the ground. Alternatively, the chassis with platform in place can be slowly driven backwards and the brake suddenly applied, causing the body to slide off until its rear legs rest on the ground; the chassis is then driven forward clear of the platform. A reasonable degree of error in alignment is possible when backing for the loading operation, as the platform front legs are clear of the ground when only a short portion of the runways are engaged, and should the chassis be at a slight angle to the platform, the strength of the various parts is sufficient to cause either the platform or chassis to move into line.

This type of Freighter can be supplied to carry loads up to two tons. The maximum body width is 6 ft. and the minimum 5 ft. The following wheelbases and body lengths are standard:-

Wheelbase.	Body Length.
7ft. 3ins.	11ft. 6ins.
8ft. 0ins.	12ft. 6ins.
8ft. 9ins.	13ft. 6ins.
9ft. 6ins.	14ft. 6ins.

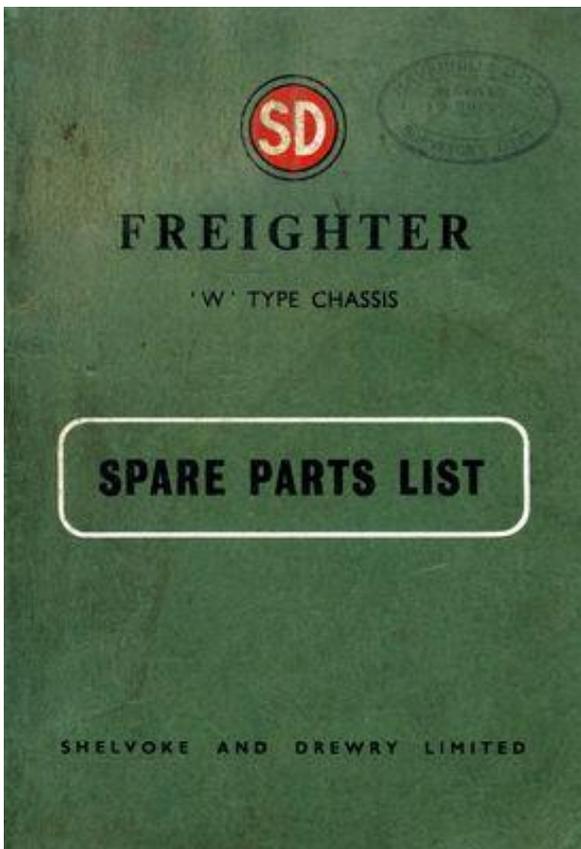
Bodies of most general types can be supplied, but owing to the special design it is imperative that these should be constructed at our works.

Roll-off Demountables. This design has somewhat different features from the stillage type, although the resultant saving of time in loading is the same. The body is rolled off the chassis, either on to a steel girder stand or on to a trolley which can afterwards be moved for short distances without the aid of mechanical power. Two men can easily roll a laden body from a chassis to a stand or vice versa. Loads up to three tons can be carried, with bodies up to a maximum length of 12 ft. the body is firmly locked when in position on the chassis, and can also be equipped with tipping gear. This arrangement facilitates removal of the load, the disposal of which can be left to the driver, all the other labour being employed on loading.

THE EDITOR'S PAGE.



When Richard Tomkins posted this photo I thought it was delightful. It's from the very earliest days of Shelvoke & Drewry and shows Richard's Great Grandfather, Percy Tomkins, on the right who was Works Manager from 1922 to 1929.



Phil Clifford very kindly sent me this Spares Parts List for the 'W' type chassis. Perhaps I'm a bit of a nerd but I enjoyed recalling the parts that made up the front and rear axles, and the petrol engine components also brought back memories.

There are fascinating little bits & pieces in the book where the mechanics have listed parts requiring replacement. The chassis number is noted as :- RW572129 with engine No. 118/1/1659



In this photo Barrie Woods is seen demonstrating a TBN Pakamatic in Barnstable in 1970. Owen Whitehand's memories published in Newsletter Extra No. 4 caused Barrie to reminisce.

"When I was having lessons to get myself a class 1 HGV licence I was seconded to Ernie Harnes who normally drove the Commer with the Swan-neck trailer used for delivering fork lift trucks. On this particular occasion we had a demo or a delivery at Heathrow Airport. So, with Ernie in the passenger seat I duly drove to the freight handling area and we off-loaded the fork truck. (This meant hauling out the two lots of rear trailer wheels and jacking the trailer floor down to ground level). Whilst there, after resetting the rear wheels we set up a number of underused traffic cones for me to drive around and reverse etc, at one point just for fun I actually drove under a Boeing 747 between the engines! It would seem security wasn't as tight in those days!"

1970's EXPORTS to IRAN

In the late 1960's SD were successful in obtaining orders from Iran to supply refuse collector bodies in kit form. Stan Quin told me:- "We tried to ensure that delivery dates were met at a time when many other UK companies were failing to fulfil such commitments. In fact we were often complimented by overseas customers who compared their SD experience with other less reliable companies. One example was Iran, where they were let down repeatedly by British Leyland who provided the parts for chassis they assembled for accommodating the SD body equipment, which we shipped out in CKD condition."

Roger Morrisroe recalls:- Keith Dunham and Roger Noon went out with the first ones to set up the assembly build and I went out in October 1970 for a month to sort out some problems. The first kits were Pakamatics and the Huckbolts were shearing because they were not shimming the body to the chassis and were winding the hopper down with the side torsion bars. The packing box would only cycle at about 3 strokes per minute because they were using incorrect sae oil and a low capacity wobble pump which I think were purchased locally."

SD 100

In 2022 it will be 100 years since Shelvoke & Drewry was founded by James Drewry and Harry Shelvoke. Two events are being planned to celebrate the centenary.

**Peter Johnston Chairman of McCreath Taylor (N.I.) Ltd
is organising**

A GRAND DISPLAY OF PRESERVED SD VEHICLES.



In Conjunction with the Annual Classic & Vintage Commercial Gathering at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon, Warwickshire on
Saturday 11th June 2022 and Sunday 12th June 2022
10.00 am to 4.00 pm

To register your vehicle for display and for further details
Please contact:-

Malcolm Bates on 07831 798042

On the assumption that we will have returned to some form of normality by 2022 Peter Johnston has reached an agreement with the British Motor Museum to incorporate an SD Centenary Celebration in their event.

Entry to the event will include entry to the Museum and specialised selling stalls. Ticket prices are reduced if purchased in advance.

There is camping available on the site.

In normal times some 400 commercial vehicles are on display at this event.

At this early stage Peter especially asks owners of preserved SD vehicles to register their interest by contacting Malcolm Bates.

Further information will be provided at a later date.

The SD Enthusiasts' Club



are hoping to arrange an exhibition in Letchworth Garden City in collaboration with the First Garden City Museum and the Garden City Collection.

It is hoped to hold this over a period of time perhaps at One Garden City, Broadway, Letchworth.

A celebratory event will be held for ex-employees and their near relatives followed by refreshments and a chance to talk and catch up.

The date and time will not be announced until Spring/Summer 2021.

**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 December Winter Issue.