



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

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From the Editor.

In this issue two former employees share their memories of working at S&D. In the first of a two part account Keith Rogers looks back to 1967 (Page 2.) whilst Barrie Woods has reached part 4 of his reminiscences (Page 4.) A further article relates to apprentices and there is a feature about the Revopak. Along with news of existing vehicles, the sadness of the closure of S&D and a look forward to celebrating the centenary of the founding of the company, we have the usual mixed batch of items.

Brian Carpenter Editor 1st September 2021.

THIRTY YEARS AGO.



It's September 1991 and the gates of the Blackhorse Road Factory close for the final time. S&D as we knew it no longer exists. The sign on the gate reads : "No Milk." From the left:- Mick Light, Peter Hankin, Dave Stratton, Brian McPherson.

A VERY SAD DAY.

For the first fifty eight years of its existence S&D had just four Managing Directors. From 1922 until 1935 James Drewry and Harry Shelvoke were joint Managing Directors. When James Drewry left to become a Director at Hands Trailers Harry Shelvoke continued as sole M.D. until 1949 when he became Chairman and was succeeded by Morris Davenport as M.D. On the retirement of Morris Davenport in 1969 Stanley Quin, a former SD apprentice became Managing Director.

Fred Hooson was appointed as M.D. in 1980 with Stanley Quin becoming Chairman.

Sadly from about that time the fortunes of S&D declined and a take over by the Dempster Division of Krug International did not reverse that trend. After a succession of M.D.'s and a final management buyout the company ceased trading in 1991 and the remains of the company were purchased by Dennis Bros – ironically SD's major competitor throughout its history.

A VARIED CAREER AT S&D Part 1.

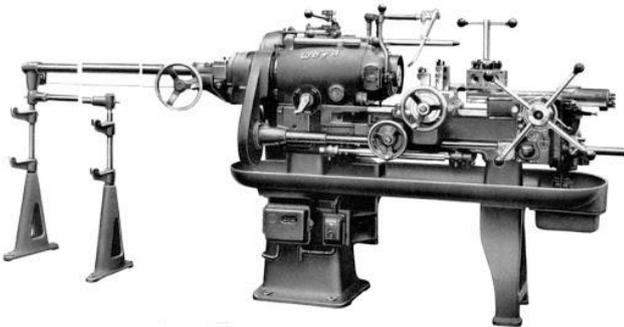
By Keith Rogers.



**The Cobridge Contractor Road Sweeper on SD's 'P' series chassis in operation with the Highland Council.
Peter Jarman photo.**

I came to S&D in 1967 as Chief Jig & Tool Draughtsman working under Bob Edlin and alongside Arthur "Curly" Warren. In 1983 the Company was bought by the Dempster Division of Krug International and I managed a trip to the Dempster plant in Knoxville, my first and only visit to the States. I went with Mick Walker from the Service Dept. There we met up with Bill Ball, who had joined the company from British Leyland, and Walter Lees. What a eye opener that was! I had to sign for everything so that Walter could sign my expenses sheet. The day started with a trip to the plant, a couple of guided tours and back to the hotel bar to discuss what we had seen following dinner in the evening. On our return no one from the management asked how Mick and I had got on. I designed a few welding fixtures for the Dempster hopper, but I could sense that it was nearing the end for the company.

The following year, 1984, it was decided to close the Machine Shop and I worked with the Auctioneers to clear the factory of machines many of which were in poor condition. I remember a Milwaukee milling machine on which operating instructions were cast into the body in French and which dated from 1940.



[Your Editor has fond memories of the Ward 2A capstan lathe – the first machine he operated at S&D as an apprentice.]
When once this was completed I was re-employed as a draughtsman. In 1986 S&D acquired the design, manufacturing and marketing rights of the Cobridge range of road sweepers

from Cobridge Engineers of Thrapston. In the agreement, Shelvoke Dempster added the 7.5, 12/13 and 16-tonne GVW sweepers to its range of refuse collection and waste disposal equipment. The smallest machine, the District, was mounted on Commer chassis whilst the County and Contractor were usually on Dodge/Renault chassis.

Phil Clarke was the boss of Cobridge and I was made his draughtsman. He was great to work with, a good sense of humour and very enthusiastic in his work. He gave me lots of freedom and I enjoyed his daily limerick.

When in July 1990 production of the sweepers stopped I was made redundant again so I had the joy of being made redundant twice from the same company.

Keith Rogers. December 2020.

In Part 2 Keith recalls some of the characters he encountered at S&D.

EDITOR'S NOTE ABOUT JIGS & TOOLS.

For readers who are unfamiliar with engineering production I feel some explanation of Keith's work as Chief Jig & Tool Draughtsman is necessary.

Part of that work involved designing welding fixtures which hold parts in place so that the components can be welded together. There is quite some skill required to ensure that the completed part can be extracted from the fixture when it has been welded. The parts to be welded can vary in size from small brackets to complete refuse collection bodies.

The most common use of jigs is to accurately position drilled holes in a component to ensure that the parts fit correctly and if replacements are ever required they will fit together exactly. Both jigs and fixtures will be produced by the Tool Room where the craftsmen produce one item at a time.

THOSE FABULOUS REVOPAKS.



A 1970/71 TY Revopak. Photo: Courtesy of Classic Refuse Trucks (Jaap Mikkers)

The Revopak was launched at the Torbay Conference in June 1970. In December it was introduced to about 140 people engaged in the refuse collection business in North West England at the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool. The event was reported in the 'Public Cleansing' magazine in February 1971.

The Revopak was demonstrated collecting refuse in the streets of Blackpool. Firstly conventional dustbins were emptied into the 1 ½ cubic yard hopper. Then a selection of cartons were thrown in and in just 3 mins. 10 seconds 15 cu. yds had been packed into the body. Next it was demonstrated with 140 plastic sacks being loaded in three minutes. 'Public Cleansing' commented:- "The two S. & D. demonstrator loaders must be highly commended for their speed of loading, this, however, permitted Mr. Jack Wilkinson to prove his contention that the Revopak can deal with any speed of loading."

Finally the crushing power of those rotating tines was demonstrated as a four-seater settee, several armchairs and a large sideboard were all easily swept into the body. The final test was to crush two large refrigerators, one at a time, which it achieved with ease as after three passes the pieces were small enough to pass into the body.

The consensus was that S&D had produced another winner to follow in the reputation gained with their Pakamatic.

The Revopak continued in production for a further twenty years and is still remembered with affection. This was demonstrated in May when three members of the SD Enthusiasts' Club Facebook Group recalled their memories of the impressive power of the Revopak.

Trevor Wood learned that the Revopak wasn't indestructible when his crew called at a shop and were asked to take away a chiller cabinet. Having struggled through the door with the cabinet the Revopak easily crushed it to pieces. Later in the day the crew noticed that the arm holding the rake in place had fractured. An SD engineer came down to replace the arm with a beefier one.

Trevor recalled that in the 1970's people were rapidly changing their black & white TV's for colour ones and up to 10 were put out for disposal every day. The Revopak had a bin lifter fitted so the system devised was to stop the rake, put the TV into the hopper, close the doors and the TV was gone. The spare vehicle was a Pakamatic and here the procedure was to stop the packing drawer, put the TV in the hopper, crouch down and pull the handle to start the packing cycle as bits of the TV flew over your head. Fluorescent tubes were equally a hazard.!

Ben Ivansson commented :-" I learnt on my the first day that if I saw any fluorescent tubes in the bins then the safest thing was to lift a bottle out and then put it back in with the lid shut and hopefully it would bust the tube, if not just keep doing it till it did! It wasn't too bad on an empty lorry but once it got about a quarter full if you tipped a bin with a tube in it then it would explode when it hit the heap of glass inside, and throw slivers of glass out the top."

Ben noticed that modifications were carried out to the Revopak tines over time and finally ended up with clear plastic tubes over the tines for some unknown reason. Kevin Murphy-Steele said he believed that this was because there were instances of broken glass or debris flying out from the rubbish as it was being crushed and hitting the workers or pedestrians in the street.



S & D Memories No. 4. By Barrie Woods.

S & D supplied a good number of Fork Trucks to British Railways, some to their Trafford Park yard. I remember one occasion I was actually on a delivery with a TY somewhere up north, on arrival at Shefford there was a considerable hold up.

One approaches Shefford from Letchworth in a southerly direction, arriving at the central junction where it was straight on for Bedford or turn left to Ampthill and the M1. The left turn took one under the Hitchin to Bedford Railway line. There were four brick arches, the main larger one spanned the main road. The cause of the hold-up; a contractor's lorry carrying a brand new S & D Fork truck had miscalculated the height of the mast which had clouted the bridge. In doing so it had dislodged quite a number of bricks, burst a couple of the trailer tyres and severely bent the two hydraulic rams which controlled the mast.



Mechanical handling transformed British Railways goods transport. Western and Midland regions placed large orders for the Freightlifter Model 100.

I'm not sure of the outcome from that incident, but I soon found myself at the helm of our trusty Commer Artic with a British Railways Fork truck on board bound for Trafford Park! The problem with this particular model was their mast when closed was around 15ft high, hence the contretemps with the Shefford Bridge. Ernie Harmes came along as second man on this venture because of this height situation. The Carpenter's shop made us a long wooden pole with a 'V' shaped end, which when required could be used to lift up telephone wires and the like. Bridge heights along the route were checked, I think with the AA. We made our way via the A421 and A600 to gain the M1 at Junction 13. At the first overbridge we pulled on to the hard shoulder. Ernie walked forward to direct me through watching the height very carefully, we made it by a whisker. That unnerved us slightly, so we pulled into Newport Pagnell Services and had a word with the traffic police who assured us that the bridge we had negotiated was the lowest on our route. Satisfied with that we resumed our journey, albeit with some trepidation. We exited at Junction 18 on to the A5. And made good

progress, Ernie watching hawk-like for any overhead wires. We had to stop a few times to negotiate some.

At Brownhills there is a major junction these days, but then a simpler affair where the A5 proceeded straight under an arch railway bridge. This immediately looked too low for us to pass under. Ernie again climbed down and walked well ahead. I had all my lights on to keep other traffic at bay. I manoeuvred to the centre of the road where the arch was at its peak, and very, very slowly went through. We made it! There were no more problems and we arrived at the container depot all in one piece – well almost! We removed the rear wheels from the trailer and set the jacks to lower it, added ramps and safely drove the fork truck on to terra firma. When we came to test it – problems with the hydraulic cables which were wound around cable drums at the very top of the mast and despite our caution with the A5 bridge it looked as if we had bent over the tops of these drums so preventing them revolving.



This Defiant 14 is fitted with paper handling equipment and the mast top cable drums can be seen in this photo.

We could do little as the problem was 15ft up in the air, so contacted the local S & D Service depot in Manchester and off we went home.

Barrie C. Woods 21st August 2020



This Model 72 Freightlifter at Reeds' Paper Mill has an outstandingly tall mast for handling paper rolls.

All three photos from the late Bob Edlin's collection.

SHELVOKE & DREWRY APPRENTICES.



SD Apprenticeship Awards 1977/78

In April Mark Stapely posted this photo on our Facebook page of the 1977/78 Apprentice Awards held at the Broadway Hotel, Letchworth, saying:- "I am in the middle row 2nd from right. Does anyone else recognise themselves?"

Paul Basson recognised Andrew Phillips second row, second from the left, but that leaves a lot of missing names. Can you help, please?

The caption read:- Shelvoke & Drewry apprentices photographed with a car they were constructing, on this day, 17th May 1976.

The following comments were received:-

Allan Kearns:- Tony Chapman was the man on the right, Ian Morrow was apprentice below Melvin Welsh to Tony's left Andrew Phillips was bottom row left hand side. Please check date think it was 1977 or 78

Mary Buckingham Carter:- My husband was in this race at Wardown Park Luton in the team from SKF Luton

Ian Morrow:- There am I. Middle row, far right. I remember this well. Including peddling around Wardown Park I relays for 24 hours. It's 1978.

Mark Stapley :- There was Dave Chapman and Bert Kerr in the 1st year plus Keith Mullan and Doug Flint As well as Dave Porter in the 2nd, 3rd & 4th years

Graham Grummitt :-Andrew Philips far left

Martin Blatch :- back row is Keith Masters Dave Porter Mervin ? Tony Chapman

Keith Rogers confirmed L to R in white coats :- Keith Masters and Dave Porter

Conclusion from the above :- Centre row :- On left Andrew Phillips, on right Ian Morrow.

Back Row L to R. :- Keith Masters, Dave Porter, Melvin Walsh, Tony Chapman.

Date probably 1978.



Also on our Group Facebook page the Garden City Collection posted this picture in May.

NEWS OF SOME SURVIVING SD VEHICLES.



In July Bob Dowling posted in our Facebook Group:- "I've come across this PY Route Chief in Kilkenny, Ireland and I'm in the process of trying to buy it. It's from 1987, is ex council and it's complete except it's missing the hydrologic pump on the front.

Your Editor believes this is the only surviving RouteChief apart from possibly in Malta.



Tommy Moore sent in these two photos of the TN Gully Emptier Reg. No. KLK 464 K under restoration in Northern Ireland. It's good to see all the progress that has been made.

SD 100 – 2022

A reminder – should you need it - that next year will be the centenary of the foundation of Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd. Plans are in hand for the two events to be held:-

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:-

Peter Johnston on 07860 868967
Or Malcolm Bates on 07831 798042

AN EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE THE CENTENARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF SHELVOKE & DREWRY Ltd.



The Museum at One Garden City
Broadway Letchworth SG6 3BF

26th September until 30th November 2022.

In conjunction with the Shelvoke & Drewry Enthusiasts' Club there will
be a special display at the above Museum.

For Opening Times See:- <https://www.letchworth.com/museum>
Or phone :- 01462 530350

The Shelvoke & Drewry Enthusiasts' Club Newsletter is
published four times a year on 1st March, 1st June, 1st
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mailed to me at: [pinnerboy\[at\]btinternet.com](mailto:pinnerboy[at]btinternet.com)

Next Issue :- 1st December 2021 Winter Issue.

