

COLIN HUMBLE

1928 -2020



It was with personal sadness, shared with many others, that I learned that Colin Humble SD's former Sales Manager for the South West Region had died on 16th December 2020 at the age of 92. Colin had been a great encouragement to me in the early days of the SD Enthusiasts' Club and continued to supply stories from his fund of memories. Many have written to me following Colin's death and it feels right to me to share these with you, as well as recalling some of Colin's own memories.

Colin's funeral took place on Thursday 7th January 2021 and Marion, Colin's widow paid this tribute to him.

Colin Charles Humble. A Gentle ... Man.

When Marion met Colin she referred to him as "A gentle ... man" and so he remained during their 37 years of marriage. A kind, thoughtful, funny gentle man.

But he had a life before Marion when he was married to June, the mother of his two children Steven and Jacqueline, of whom he was justifiably proud. Steve lives in Cape Town where he runs a very successful international company, building and maintaining high powered racing cars. He frequently races himself, causing concern to his father. Jacqui also has an interesting career as the Company Secretary at Ridge Wharf Yacht Centre, Nr. Wareham.

As an aside, Marion's niece married Marion's stepson. It is legal!

Born in Great Yarmouth Colin spent his formative years in Hove, where his father was the Borough Engineer and Surveyor.

On being called for National Service in the Royal Engineers Colin was posted to Germany to help clear up Hamelin and Hamburg. These cities were to play an important part in subsequent years as Marion had close friends in both cities with whom she spent many happy holidays, particularly enjoying many a German Christmas.

Colin volunteered to be the personal driver for an Army Officer which gave him the opportunity to become

familiar with the country. There were many trips to the Hartz Mountains for skiing. Years later he was to follow this up with snowmobiling in Canada to celebrate his 70th birthday.

On returning to the UK he hoped to pursue his chosen profession as an architect. However, with the end of the War many young men were returning to civilian life and his father suggested an apprenticeship with the highly regarded firm of Shelvoke & Drewry might be a wiser choice. The company was destined to become one of the world's leading manufacturers of commercial vehicles. During his apprenticeship the area Colin found most interesting was sales. Many of you will testify to his friendly approach and the ability to put potential customers at their ease.

Colin had a younger brother who sadly was injured at birth. His parents employed a nurse to care for him and Emily became a valued and beloved member of the family well after it was decided Ronnie needed to be in a home where his requirements were better catered for. Colin and Marion frequently visited him in Brighton and ensured he was looked after with care and consideration. Ronnie died in 2016.

Colin was an Old Boy of Hove Grammar School where he had an interesting education during the War years. Many of the male teaching staff had been called up and the

school was shared with a girls' college evacuated from London.

Colin continued to attend the annual Old Boys' Reunion until a couple of years ago by which time the class of 1935-1944 was somewhat thin on the ground.

Reference to Colin would not be complete without mention of his skill as an organist. In his youth he was frequently called upon to fill in for absent church organists. In his latter years he was the organist at the ancient village church of Sherford in the South Hams.

When told of his demise many friends commented "He was such a lovely man". Indeed he was ... a gentle man.

When SD opened a Service Depot in Exeter in 1976 Mike Mullarkey was appointed as the Manager and a strong working relationship was formed with the area Sales Manager. Colin Humble used to say "I sell them, and if the break down Mike mends them." This working relationship developed into a strong friendship and regard for one another.

Mike Mullarkey's Tribute.

I have been privileged to have known Colin for over 50 years, working and socially. Our working relationship with S&D was excellent.

Colin was always calling into the Exeter Depot on his way to and from his customer visits and was extremely well liked by all the staff at Exeter.

He was always happy to help me out with the delivery of new vehicles, following the pre delivery inspection at the depot, by following me to bring me back to Exeter, and of course the customers were always happy to see Colin following up the order he had taken from them.

In my service visits I was always asked "how is Colin". he was well respected by all his customers.

The story that Colin used to relate most was the sale of a PN Revopak to the Scilly Isles, they got in touch to say they had seen a toy model of a SD vehicle and said they would like a PN. Colin was put in touch with the authorities and they placed an order without even asking for a demo. Colin would rate that as his easiest ever sale!!!

Socially we enjoyed many lunches together especially after retirement. Sadly because of the COVID restrictions I had not seen Colin at all this year. We had of course spoken on the phone particularly when he received the SD Newsletters.

Many other people shared their thoughts about Colin by email and by posting in our Facebook Group.

FROM FORMER SD EMPLOYEES.

Roger Morrisroe, ex- apprentice and Quality Control Manager:- "So sorry to hear of the death of Colin.

When I was a Service Inspector for the West country down to Weston Super Mare, occasionally our paths would cross. On a couple of occasions when he was trying to sell to a new customer he would ask me along as well, to push the SD service side."

Barrie Woods, former SD Demonstrator Driver then a Salesman at Norba :- "Very sad news about Colin, always my favourite S & D Rep, then later at Norba with me as well."

Steve Woodward, former apprentice and Engineering Manager, :- "A real gent and friend of many years who will missed by many. RIP"



The Church at Sherford in the South Hams.

The last time I spoke with him in late November he told me sadly he was terminally ill. He also said that he knew he had had a good innings and had no regrets.

Colin was a true English gentleman and he will be missed.

My condolences to Marion, his daughter Jackie and son Steve

RIP Colin



The Isles of Scilly PN Revopak.

Owen Whitehand, a former SD Demonstrator Driver:-“ Please send my condolences to Marion and family, at times like this I always remind people that it's quality of life that matters, not quantity and, I think, Colin had life quality by the bucketful.

I think I may have met him a few times and to us 21yr old Demonstration Drivers, after many weeks on the interesting but lonesome road, the salesman could make the difference between yet another 'run of the mill' demonstration or something to remember.”

Kim Syder, whose father was Jack Arnold SD's Service Manager:- “Thank you for telling us the sad news. I know dad was very fond of Colin and they met up with him and Marion when he and mum were down there on holiday .”

OTHER MESSAGES RECEIVED.

Paul Hobday, who now lives in Brittany:- “Very sad to learn of Colin's passing. We were competitors in business (in that I represented Dennis Eagle in the South West) but became good friends. He was a gentleman, and a formidable salesman. His customers were fiercely loyal to him. After he retired, Colin would always come to our stand at the IWM show and have a cuppa with me and he kept a keen interest in the industry. My condolences to his family, and his many friends in the industry. RIP”

Ray Rudge from Walsall:- “Sorry to hear this sad news , my sincere condolences to Colin's family and friends.”

Timothy Byrne from Dudley, West Midlands:- “I am sorry to hear this news.”

David Redd:- Sorry to hear of his passing

Bill Forrest from Glasgow:- “My sincere condolences to Colin's family. It's never easy losing a loved one, but at this time of year it's all the more difficult.”

Martin Kelly from Glasgow:- “My heartfelt condolences to Colin's family and friends and to all the S&D family as well. RIP Colin.”

Phil Tallant from Dublin:- “Sad to hear may he rest in peace.”

Philip Clifford From Bury St. Edmunds, Nigel Salt from Wathfield, Robert Tarling from Huntingdon, Michael Coffey from North Carolina, and David Cassin from Dublin also offered their condolences.

Colin generously shared his memories with me and the readership of the SD Enthusiasts' Club, examples follow.

THE EASIEST SALE I EVER MADE.

Colin Humble – former SD Sales Manager in the South-West. Summer 2003.



The Channel 4 'Salvage Squad' Programme brought back memories of the sale of SCY 786 X to the Scilly Isles Council in 1982. That's over 20 years ago!

Brian Lowen, the Island's Technical Officer visited the Institute of Waste Management exhibition in Paignton in 1981, and saw the Revopak vehicle there. He talked with us, and liked what he saw and heard. At the time we were giving out Corgi diecast models of the vehicle, similar to the one below.

Brian took the model along to the Council Meeting at which our tender for the Revopak was to be discussed. He showed it to the

Councillors and demonstrated the way the tines worked using the little plastic wheel on the side. He also demonstrated the way the hydraulic ram discharged the load. “Yes, we'll have one of those,” said the Councillors. “It was the model that did the trick,” Brian later told me.

This episode reminded me that in the early days Harry Shelvoke gave out a little brass model of a horse to Councillors, called “The Last Horse”, as a way of emphasising that the day of the horse was over. My father had one of those models as he'd been the Borough Engineer at Hove, on the South Coast. In 1949, following military service, I'd really wanted to follow in my father's

footsteps, but he advised against it. "There are far too many young men leaving the forces and looking to start a career, Colin," he told me. "The market for Borough Engineers is a limited one, let's see if Shelvokes' will take you on."

I have the distinction of being the last apprentice to be interviewed by Harry Shelvoke. Because of my age my apprenticeship lasted just three years, and in 1952 I was sent to the Birmingham Depot, to experience the service organisation in operation. Then from 1955 to 1958 I worked with Cyril Jones, the London and Midlands area Sales Manager, learning the ropes. In 1958 I was appointed to the South-West Area, where I remained until I joined Norba in 1985.

For many years Jack Wilkinson was the Sales Director. When he died suddenly in a pub following a normal day's work, it was a sad day. I couldn't possibly have had a better boss than Jack.

The sale of **SCY 786 X** involved no cost in demonstrating the vehicle, no expensive trips to the Scilly Isles, a little Corgi model did the trick. If only all my sales had been as easy as that!



SCY 786 X during filming for Salvage Squad.

Magazine Issue No. 2 Summer 2003.

PAGES FROM A SALESMAN'S NOTEBOOK

Before local government reorganisation, many councils only used one or two vehicles. Cirencester Rural was one such Council. They used a local coal-man to collect refuse. An ordinary open lorry was used. The Council thought something more up to date was needed. So, having been given an assurance that if his contract ended in under three years the Council would buy the vehicle from him, the man agreed to purchase a Fore & Aft tipper. The coal-man visited the works at Letchworth and was shown the vehicles, and I gave the quotation to him, and he said 'Yes, I'll buy one.' Several months later, Basil Barber said to me: 'Colin, we've still not had an order from the Cirencester coal-man, will you go and find out what's happening?' I visited and was immediately asked how his vehicle was progressing.

'I'm terribly sorry, but if you've sent in an order, we seem to have lost it,' I said.

'Order? I said I wanted it, isn't that enough?'

With that he found an ordinary coal bill and wrote: 'One S & D as specification.' When I asked what colour he wanted, he replied: 'It was a green one I saw at the works, green will be fine.' The vehicle was delivered – another satisfied customer.

Colin Humble.

Former Sales Manager for the South-West area.

Magazine Issue No. 3. Autumn 2003.

ANOTHER PAGE FROM A SALESMAN'S NOTEBOOK.

When I visited the Chief Health Inspector of Torrington R.D.C. I was told that the largest vehicle they could use in the narrow Devon lanes was a 7 cu. yd. Karrier Bantam. So I quoted for a 'W' type Fore & Aft tipper with an 8ft wheelbase, which, fitted with a Power Press, had a capacity of 12 cu. yds. This would produce twice the load of a 7 cu. yd. vehicle. Our bid was successful and the machine was duly delivered.

When I visited a few weeks after delivery the Health Inspector told me: "We're very disappointed the new vehicle isn't doing any better than the old Karrier side loader." Unable to believe this I asked to see the 7 cu. yd. side loader. It turned out to be a Karrier Gamecock with a 14 cu. yd. Derby type four bay body. This had high type sliding shutters. This, of course, explained everything, the capacity of the Karrier was twice as much as I'd been told.

I phoned Basil Barber, S & D's Sales Director, and he agreed we should take back the small vehicle and replace it with the much larger 16/18 cu. yd. Fore & Aft body with Power Press to give about 24 cu. yd capacity. The only extra charge to Torrington R.D. C. was the cost of re-painting the small vehicle when it was sold to another customer. This typical approach to customer's problems gained S & D a reputation that made selling a lot easier.

Colin Humble.

Former Sales Manager for the South-West area.

Magazine Issue No. 4. Winter 2003.

THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO TO PLAN.

Dear Brian,

The photo in the Summer magazine of the air-operated hygienic shutters reminded me of an amusing incident.

Hygienic Shutters were first exhibited at the Waste Management Conference at Brighton in 1958. At that time each exhibitor was allowed about 10 minutes to show their exhibits in the display arena. Len and Vic Breed, two demonstration drivers, were "drilled" at Letchworth in preparation for the display. Len, who was supplied with a brand new galvanised dustbin, was to leave from the near-side of the vehicle with the bin and walk beyond the rear of the vehicle. He was then to turn to the back of the Fore & Aft tipper, on touching the bar with his waist the shutter would open and he would then go through the motion of discharging the imaginary contents into the tipper's hopper.

When he touched the bar and attempted to do this, nothing happened! Len then threw the bin down in disgust and returned down the near-side of the vehicle to inform Vic that the shutter had failed to operate. This caused some amusement in the crowd of a few hundred delegates who were watching the display. Vic, the driver, noted this and climbed down from the cab, walked down the off-side of the vehicle to see what was happening. Discovering that Len wasn't at the rear of the tipper, Vic walked to the front whilst Len returned to the rear! By this time everybody was enjoying the scene – except for those of us from S&D which included the Sales Director, Jack Wilkinson.

After one more go Len and Vic managed to meet up. It turned out that the separate air compressor was driven by a power take off from the gearbox, and was not operating because Vic had had his foot on the clutch, so breaking the power train. I believe a lot of people thought we did it on purpose!

All the best *Colin Humble, Torquay*, former Sales Manager for the South-West.

July 2006



A 'T' type Fore & Aft tipper fitted with hygienic shutters.

PAKAMATIC PROBLEMS.



A TY Pakamatic.

The account of SD's Pakamatic in the last issue brought back memories for Colin Humble, who was the S&D Sales Manager for South West England. On the telephone he told me that Bristol were among the first customers for the Pakamatic. At the time their fleet mainly consisted of Dennis vehicles and it was the addition of Tom Tillson to a sales visit to the City that resulted in four vehicles being ordered.

Later Bristol complained that the Pakamatic wasn't performing as well as the Paxit II's they were operating and they considered that it was the sweeper plate in the Dennis hopper that cleared the hopper more efficiently than on the Pakamatic. Colin was invited to spend a day in Bristol observing the Paxit in operation.

From this Colin realised that the vertical sides to the Dennis hopper allowed the refuse to fall to the bottom more readily than the sloping sides of the Pakamatic hopper allowed. Operators would poke refuse with a stick to push jammed items to the bottom of the SD hopper, which was an unsafe way of operating. The Pakamatic hopper was redesigned with vertical sides and the same efficiency as the Paxit was achieved.

Yet another example of the close relationship between S&D and their customers in the quest for more efficient refuse collection.

Magazine Issue 20 Winter 2007

“PLEASE DON’T SCRATCH THAT PAINT.”

Colin Humble recalls that in the 1950’s St. Ives in Cornwall purchased an SD vehicle. Delivery from Letchworth took three days and Colin accompanied the driver, Charlie Highfield. All went well until the narrow Cornish roads came into play. Charlie insisted on driving in the middle of the road. Car drivers travelling in the other direction had to avoid the vehicle as best as they could. “I’m not having scratches on the paintwork,” was Charlie’s excuse.

The vehicle arrived in St. Ives in pristine condition. But several car drivers had alarming experiences on that day



A typical 1950’s SD vehicle – the ‘W’ type Fore & Aft tipper.

BARNSTAPLE MEMORIES.



The photo of Barrie Woods shown on the left in our Autumn issue led Colin Humble, former SD Sales Manager for the South Western Region to tell me :- “Barnstaple bought a TN Pakamatic following the demonstration. This replaced a pre-war SD Freighter. The narrow roads had meant that Barnstaple couldn’t find anything to beat the Freighter in terms of width until the TN came along.”

From the Winter 2020 Newsletter.

Footnote.

In March 2016 I took a coach holiday to Babbacombe and Colin was keen that we should meet up. He was an excellent host and took me to indoor bowling at Torquay Football Club, and arranged in the evening for us to be joined by Mile Mullarkey where we enjoyed dinner in Torquay. The next day I was taken to Dartmouth where we lunched. Those were an interesting couple of days as we shared memories of the company that had set us both on satisfying careers.

We were regularly in touch by telephone and I believe that Colin was appreciative of the way the SD Enthusiasts’ Club has kept former employees informed and in touch with one another. I offer this tribute to a true gentleman.

Brian Carpenter February 2021.