



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB

NEWSLETTER EXTRA

STANLEY WRIGHT SPECIAL ISSUE. October 2019.

From the Editor.

In the middle of October a postal package arrived through my letter box. The contents were a fascinating insight into sides of Mr. Harry Shelvoke's life of which I had been previously unaware. Mr. Harry Wright had kindly loaned me some details from his father, Stanley Wright's life. For a number of years Stanley was Mr. Shelvoke's chauffeur, and this package contains three private letters from Mr. Shelvoke to his chauffeur. In addition there were three photographs, two Christmas cards and Stanley Wright's passport. In the main these documents cover the years 1931 to 1946 and seemed to me to require a special edition of the Newsletter in order to do them justice. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Harry Wright for lending me this remarkable collection.

Mr. Harry Shelvoke had a reputation for being a hard taskmaster but there is no hint of this in the three letters, indeed the growing respect he had for his chauffeur appears to be demonstrated by the way the first letter is addressed:- "Dear Wright", fifteen years later it has become :- "Dear Mr. Wright", and just two years later :- "Dear Stanley."

I am indebted to both Google and Wikipedia for additional material that I have added to this account.

Brian Carpenter Editor 22nd October 2019.

Stanley Wright.

Chauffeur.

Stanley Wright was born on 18th December 1904 in Hitchin just as Ebenezer Howard's dream of a Garden City was becoming a reality in Letchworth.

He served an engineering apprenticeship and then in 1925, at the age of 20, he came to Letchworth to work at the newly formed Shelvoke and Drewry which was just two years old at the time. Four years later (1929) Mr. Shelvoke took the 24 year old Stanley Wright on as his chauffeur.

Our roads and cars in the 1930's were nothing like those of today and Stanley drove a variety of cars for Harry Shelvoke.



The first is listed as an Alldays & Onions. I confess I'd never heard of the make, but find that quite a few remain as vintage cars. Nor have I any idea of which particular model was owned by Mr. Shelvoke but I have selected the photo on the left as an example. The company that made them was based in Small Heath, Birmingham, and produced cars from 1898 to 1918.

This car was followed by a Talbot and a number of Austins and finally a Daimler Double Six. This could be the car described in Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry [Caption 8B] as :- "... ex-Prince of Wales' Daimler Double Six with royal crest still intact." The photo below was described as a Daimler Double Six.



In 1933 Harry Shelvoke noted that Stanley had driven an average of 60,000 miles a year.

To Far Away Places.



Passport Photo of Stanley Wright.

Height: 5' 9" Colour of eyes: Brown Colour of hair: Auburn.

On 22nd August 1931 a passport (No. 461857) was issued to Stanley at the Foreign Office. On 2nd September Stanley arrived in Boulogne presumably having crossed by ferry from Folkestone. I also assume that this was the 27 year old chauffeur's first experience of mainland Europe and having to drive on the 'wrong' side of the road. It was long before the roll on – roll off ferry had been invented and the Daimler Double Six would have been loaded and unloaded like this:-



Loading onto a cross channel ferry 1930's style.

On 16th September the party entered Spain at Puigcerdà in Catalonia in Northern Spain on the French/Spanish border. It may be that it was on this trip that they visited Altafulla. The town of Altafulla has a beautifully intact old quarter crowned by the Castle of Altafulla, an additional medieval castle on a small promontory overlooking the sea (Castle of the Marquises of Tamarit) and an old fishing quarter dating back to the 18th century along the beach. A modern photo is below:-



On 24th September they crossed over into Italy. For this trip there is no record of when they returned to England. [Details are taken from Stanley's passport where some of the stamps are indistinct. Although there is a distinct stamp:- "Ne peut occuper en France un emploi salarié." i.e. Can not hold a salaried job in France.]

Exactly 12 months later on 2nd September 1932 the passport is stamped to denote that Stanley entered France at Boulogne but I have no details of this trip. It may be that in 1932 these two photos were taken :-



This shows Mr. Shelvoke with his wife Minnie (nee Sinigar) on the Col du Pourtalet, a mountain pass and border crossing in the Pyrenees, between France and Spain. The pass reaches an elevation of 5,886 ft.



Here we see Stanley with Mrs. Shelvoke at the same location. [This is part of a photo measuring 4 ½ ins x 3 ins. It appears that despite the Shelvoke's comfortable life style only a rudimentary cameras was available.]

On 5th September 1933 the passport was stamped at Calais, presumably having travelled over the English Channel from Dover. By 28th September they were in Spain at Valcarlos (Northern Spain) a town on the Camino de Santiago pilgrim route. And probably on 5th October they returned to England via Calais.

The Shelvoke's 1934 holiday is somewhat more detailed. This time they arrived in Dieppe on 16th August and arrived at the border of Catalonia on 31st August, crossing over to Spain and returning the same day. On 2nd September they again crossed to Spain at Col du Perthus, crossing back the same day. Rising to an altitude of 290 metres (950 ft), it is one of the lowest border passes in the Pyrenees. It marks the western boundary of the Albera Massif.

Stanley's passport was stamped again on 9th September at Echalar Northern Spain. And on 14th September they were back aboard the ferry at Dieppe.

This remarkable record shows that Mr. Shelvoke set a month aside each year to pursue his hobbies of sketching and, [as Kaleidoscope caption 8B records] collecting armour and swords, some of which he found in Spain which were later polished by apprentices.

Back Home Again.

Letters from Harry Shelvoke to his chauffeur also reveal that together they travelled over practically the whole of England and Scotland, and took the Shelvoke's friends on social business as well as carrying business associates. In all these activities Stanley was only involved in one road accident when on an icy road, whilst the car was stationary it was struck by an out of control lorry. And on one occasion Stanley was prosecuted for exceeding the speed limit in Green Park, London.

Stanley will have been familiar with Mr. Shelvoke's home:- 'Melverley' in Pixmore Way which had been designed and built by Underwood & Kent in 1910 for Harry Shelvoke.



My photo of Melverley from 2009.

Bill Smith sent me the following photo of the interior of Melverley where Harry Shelvoke is seen sketching in his mock Baronial Hall.



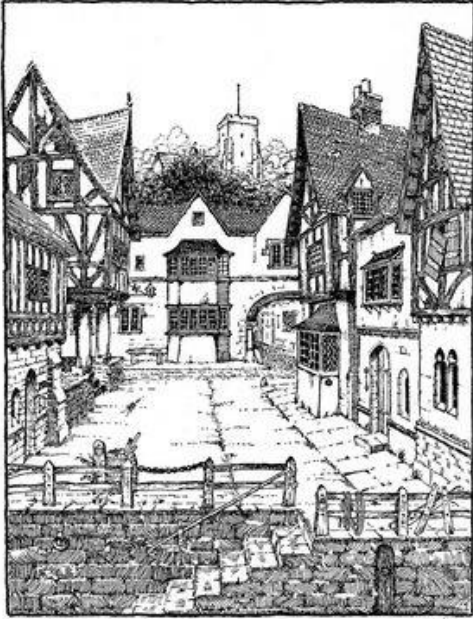
On the next page there are two of Mr. Shelvoke's sketches taken from the Christmas cards loaned to me by Harry Wright.

Mr. Shelvoke clearly had a high regard for his chauffeur. In the third letter he says:- "I have never found you otherwise than honourable and of utmost integrity." Honesty and integrity were obviously highly regarded qualities in his employees.

I am so grateful to Harry Wright for loaning this material thus allowing me to share an insight into the life of the co-founder of Shelvoke & Drewry but also to get a glimpse of the opportunities given to one of the company's earliest employees.

Brian. Editor.

Mr. Shelvoke's Sketches.



The Old Quay.

H.S.

Left:- This was the cover of a Christmas card with the greeting:-

The Season's Greetings & Every Good Wish from Mr. & Mrs. H. Shelvoke, Melverley, Letchworth, Herts.

Below:- This sketch was inside a brown cover inscribed:-

Christmas & New Year Greetings from Mr. & Mrs. H. Shelvoke, Melverley, Letchworth, Herts.

See reference on Page 2 to Tamarit Castle.



TAMARIT, CATALUNA.

A holiday impression.

The ages of the Shelvokes.

Both Harry and Minnie (nee Sinigar) were born in 1877 and were married in 1902.

Minnie died in 1937 aged 60 and Harry was remarried to Gilberte who survived him.

Harry died in 1962 aged 84.

This means that in 1922 when Shelvoke & Drewry was formed the Shelvokes were aged 45 and aged 53 in 1930.

Letter dated 30th November 1933.



MELVERLEY
LETCWORTH HERTS
TELEPHONE 92

Mr.S.Wright,
206 Rushby Place,
Letchworth.

Thursday
Nov.30th
1933.

Dear Wright,

I think I should like you to have the letter which I am now writing. There is probably no occasion for such a thing but in these uncertain days no one knows what may happen and I should like to feel that you have a testimonial - which I certainly owe you - in case you should need it when I am not here to give it to you.

You have been with me now for about nine years and have acted as my Chauffeur for five years.

During that time you have driven me approximately one-third of a million miles in all kinds of cars. These have included an Alldays & Onions, a Talbot, a number of Austins and a Daimler Double Six.

We have covered practically the whole of England and Scotland, and many thousands of miles in France. A great proportion of the latter on the difficult and sometimes dangerous roads in the Pyrenees.

I must not forget the journey into Italy and Spain.

In the whole of this time we have been involved/

involved in only one accident, when we were at a stand-still and were crashed into by a lorry which was out of control owing to a frozen road.

Furthermore, we have only been involved in one case in the Courts, and that for the purely technical offence of slightly exceeding the speed limit set for the Green Park.

I think this performance probably establishes a record but there is another aspect on which I must touch.

I cannot recall a single instance in which I have found it necessary or felt even inclined to criticise your conduct. On the other hand I have very thoroughly appreciated your loyalty and attention, while Mrs. Shelvoke and our friends, both social and business, have, as you know, very much appreciated your attitude.

I could not wish for better service than you have given me, and I trust our association will continue for many years.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

H. Shelvoke.

H. Shelvoke.

P.S. The fact that you served an Engineering Apprenticeship. And are able to supervise or actually carry out major repairs, gives you a distinct advantage over most men who handle cars nowadays.

Points that may be of interest.

Mr. Shelvoke thought that 'Milverley' Letchworth was sufficient address. His phone number: - 92!

Mr. Wright's address in Rushby Place is just a few minutes' walk from Milverley.

I have presumed that Mr. Shelvoke's concerns for the future were on account of the Great Depression which reached its height in 1932.



One final photo. Location unknown.



SHELVOKE AND DREWRY LIMITED

LETCHWORTH

HERTS

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

HS/JW.

SATURDAY,
7th December,
1946

S.Wright, Esq.,
21 Bearton Green,
HITCHIN, Herts.

Dear Mr. Wright,

I am somewhat ashamed that I was not able to see you last night, and I ask you to accept my sincere apologies.

Actually I had had a somewhat strenuous day and I had to come to decisions that were urgently necessary and to attend to certain matters which did not permit a delay, apart from which I have not been too well.

Nevertheless I had hoped to shake hands with you and wish you personally every possible success in the future.

I sincerely hope that whatever occupation you may take up will prove both congenial and lucrative and I have also to thank you for the excellent work which you have done over so long a period - not forgetting our joint excursions on the Continent, which I recall with great pleasure.

If at any time I can be of use to you I hope you will let me know and meanwhile if a recommendation is of any service I shall be very pleased to tell any enquirer that in all the time we have been associated I have never found you otherwise than honourable and of utmost integrity.

I hope I shall meet you before long and that if you are in this district you will at least look in. You will always be a welcome visitor.

Yours very sincerely,

Harry Shelvoke.

Notes:- This letter was typed on a Saturday. A five and a half day week was the norm.

Mr. Wright has removed to Hitchin the town of his birth .

MELVERLEY
LETCWORTH HERTS
TELEPHONE 92

19th August, 1948.

Dear Stanley,

I have only just this moment (10.30 a.m.) learned that tomorrow you are being married.

I am very glad indeed to hear the news and I need not tell you that I wish you and Mrs. Wright-to-be all happiness and prosperity in the years ahead.

I have not had the opportunity of telling Mrs. Shelvoke But I know she will join me most heartily in very best wishes.

I hope your business affairs prosper and I shall look forward to one day having the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Wright.

With many happy recollections and kindest regards,

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

Harry Shelvoke.

The above three letters have been re-typed in as near as possible the format of the originals in order to provide easily readable copies. **Ed.**

The Shelvoke & Drewry Enthusiasts' Club Newsletter is published four times a year on the Website www.shelvoke-drewry.co.uk and appears 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)

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