



## SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB

### NEWSLETTER EXTRA No. 7.

### Centenary Year Special. January 2022.

#### From the Editor.

2022 is a very special year for anyone with an interest of Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd. as it marks the Centenary of the founding of the Company. Therefore I intend to mark the year by a number of additional Newsletters, of which this is the first.

**Brian Carpenter Editor.**

#### DUBLIN'S Fleet of SD's.



'W' type with Newcastle body – City of Dublin.

I was sent this account of Dublin as a loyal SD customer.

*"Dublin Corporation had S&D Freighters working in the former Rathmines and Pembroke areas before World War Two. Driven and steered by handles, these transverse engined vehicles were popularly known as "Tillers". In the late 1940's the Corporation replaced its 1920's vintage solid-tyred De Dion dustcarts with two batches of S&D 'W' type Freighters, this time with steering wheels in the normal position.*

*Totalling 40 vehicles (Nos. 9 -48) the Dublin fleet of S&D's was among the largest anywhere and was of two main types. City centre vehicles had large, rear entrance van type bodies with moveable inside barriers over which the refuse was dumped, while those intended for suburban routes had side loading bodies with sliding covers. All were tippers and fitted with coach-built crew cabs. The livery was green and cream with lettering in English on one side and Irish on the other.*

*Similar vehicles were used by Dun Laoghaire Corporation and Dublin County Council. In Northern Ireland, Belfast Corporation also had a sizeable fleet of 'W' type S&D's".*

#### EPSOM & EWELL.

Peter Reed who runs a local history website ([www.eehe.org.uk](http://www.eehe.org.uk)) covering the Epsom & Ewell area of Surrey contacted me by Email writing:- "I recently bought a 35mm slide off eBay and thought you might like to share the attached scan with other members of the SD Enthusiast's Club."

He also attached is an image taken from a 1958 Borough Guide in which the caption read:

*21 Years of Progress – A refuse collection vehicle of 1937 alongside its modern counterpart.*

And the accompanying text:

*"The Corporation collects and disposes of approximately 18,000 tons of refuse annually and, compared with other local authorities in England and Wales, the cost of this service is one of the cheapest in the country. Recently, a start has been made on replacing the old type of refuse collection vehicles which are loaded at the side, by a modern type of rear-loading self-compacting machine, which considerably reduces the dust nuisance and, by compacting the refuse automatically, enables a far larger load to be carried, thus reducing the number of journeys to the point of disposal. In addition, the majority of roads in the Borough are swept and cleansed by the latest type of mechanical street sweeper."*

Should any of your members have images of other Epsom and Ewell vehicles I would love to see them.



**Epsom & Ewell 1934 SD Freighter BPL 73**

The photo in the 1958 Borough Guide showed the replacement SD 'W' type Fore & Aft tipper, and I was able to tell Peter about these vehicles and a history of how BPL 73 came to be preserved. This account now appears on:-

<https://eehe.org.uk/?p=72676>.

## THE MAKING OF AN SD ENTHUSIAST Part 1.

The stated aims of the SD Enthusiasts' Club are:- "The SD Enthusiasts' Club aims to preserve memories and the reputation of the Company that existed from 1922 until 1991 in Letchworth, Hertfordshire. And to provide details about its products:- Refuse Collection vehicles, Heavy Duty Fork Lift Trucks, Special Purpose Vehicles, Latil tractor units and it's significant production during World War II. And the memories of its employees." In this series we shall hear from ten people, four of whom own preserved vehicles, one who drove various refuse collection vehicles, and five people who were employees of SD.

### Terry Prince.



#### Terry Prince seen at the Deby Fire & Rescue Show in 2011.

Here's my story.

London's Burning first aired on our screens in 1986 and this was the starting point of my S&D journey. I was 11 years old at the time and was always interested in lorries (my Dad had his own skip lorry, a Ford D series with Edbro skip gear) and my elder brother was a close follower of the fire engines in London Fire Brigade. The pilot film fascinated me watching the Fire Engines and as I asked questions about the vehicles my brother could provide answers.

The Shelvokes (YHV 194T & GYW 628W, the latter I would own later on in life) in the film looked magnificent, they gleamed but could also do a job. Both vehicles were still owned by the London Fire Brigade at the time, loaned to London Weekend Television (along with Dockhead Fire Station) for the film. There was something about the Shelvokes, they seemed so purposeful with the square "P" cab, later I found out they were selected as the film crew could fit in the cab with the cast, anyway I was hooked! Living in London what really brought the vehicles to life was that they could often be seen locally, in fact YHV 194T was running at my local fire station (Southall) as a reserve appliance while London's Burning was aired, having a film star on the manor was a big thing! Shelvokes continued in London's Burning up to Series 2 before politics interfered in why public owned emergency vehicles were being loaned for film work.

I became more and more interested in Shelvokes from there, London Borough of Ealing had three narrow dustcarts (1988 E registration) that had the same purposeful pose from the cab the Fire Engines had and I would look out for them on their rounds. In 1988 an open day at London Fire Brigade Ruislip Workshops provided the opportunity to get a closer look, you could drive a Fire Engine for £1. There were two Shelvokes (YHV 187/198T & an ERF), as I joined the hour long queue and approached the front, it looked like I'd get the ERF, however I asked the person behind to swap as I climbed into YHV 198T for a spin around the site, the vehicle felt so special to drive (I was 15 at the time) that I wanted more. I became a regular visitor to the workshops, as I tried to see all 48 appliances. At first I was focused on the aesthetics such as which badges were still present on the front

panel (if any), was the window in the door still present (if not this indicated an accident had previously occurred,) had the blue lights been upgraded? The Shelvokes by this time were either reserve appliances or in training school, so in order to locate them I learned what vehicles were assigned to each fire station, and would visit the workshops to see which appliances were there which would then give me a lead to find where a reserve Shelvoke may be located, I'd cycle to any station in London armed with my camera and hope for the best. By this stage it was 1990 and time was against me, the Shelvokes were the oldest pumping appliances on the LFB fleet and with a new order being placed for Volvo's, photo opportunities were considered as now or never before they were withdrawn. On arriving at a fire station and peering through the glass in the appliance bay door, it was a great outcome to see a Shelvoke sitting there (or if it had the mirrored "Shelvoke SPV" badges reflecting back at me I knew a little sooner).

By this stage I was aware that after the Fire Brigade had withdrawn vehicles, they ended up as either factory appliances, in the hands of private collectors, exported or sent for scrap. On the basis that fire engines that were in the hands of private collectors were typically Dennis and coachbuilt with ash frame, I feared that the Shelvokes may just be a memory before long. It was at this point that my brother purchased his first fire engine, a Dennis F108 and this gave me the idea - could I actually buy my own Shelvoke from London Fire Brigade? I was 16 at the time and working in McDonalds, however I started saving, but a couple of weeks later came a blow, YHV 194T used in London's Burning was used as a reserve at Heston Fire Station and had been involved in an accident and would not be repaired, therefore would be withdrawn from Ruislip Workshops. A week later came the news that GYW 607W would be withdrawn from Lambeth Workshops following a gearbox fault, time was clearly of the essence.

I started looking at the vehicles in a different way, based on condition and what I could learn from the workshops to down select the best example I could. Appliances used for training were not subject to the abuse that the reserves were exposed to and rust was a factor, typically this was rather crudely repaired by pop riveting aluminium over the top of the infected area, this was particularly noticeable of appliances in East London as these were maintained by Barking Workshops who didn't have a body shop. I'd got down to a shortlist of two, YHV 187T, a driver training appliance based at Harrow Fire Station which was in very good condition, used only for a drive a couple of times a week. GYW 614W, was a reserve appliance that was based in South West Area, before being reallocated to East under Barking Workshops, I always seemed to find it wherever it went and it was also in good condition. GYW 614W was first to come to auction of the two at a huge fire brigade sale at Martson's Motor Auction in Tottenham in 1991. I attended however my savings weren't sufficient to meet the £700 bid as a motor dealer from Heston purchased 6 Shelvoke pumps and a Hydraulic Platform. GYW 614W was then advertised for £2,999 the following week!

It was October 1992 before YHV 187T went to auction, fortunately it was the only Fire Engine in the sale and I managed to secure it. At the time I was 17 without a driving license and my brother helped with the collection (volunteers are not hard to find



for Fire Engine driving!). YHV187T was the 46th withdrawn of the 48 LFB Shelvokes so I had left it late!

So now having fulfilled my ambition, I then looked to previously disposed Shelvokes that I could find which was a challenge in the days before internet. Unbeknown to me, a further 4 LFB Shelvokes were also in private collections, these being YHV 186T, GYW 613,628 & 631W. Having met with private collectors, I learned of a breaker in Paddock Wood, Kent where the 4 of the Shelvokes bought by the motor dealer in Heston had been found (presumably because he couldn't sell many at his asking price). I went to the yard and found a number of remains and "almost" complete vehicles (minus radiators, wheels and tyres). The radiators had been removed by ripping off the front panels and cutting through the front bumper, damaging everything in the way, it was a shame to see vehicles that had saved lives now on the brink of scrap. Ironically one of these vehicles was GYW 614W and despite the damage, £960 later she was mine and brought home to be restored before appearing on EastEnders in 1996.

I continued to seek out further vehicles, I purchased GYW 613W with a damaged engine, however the parts were used to complete GYW 614W and my brother purchased YHV 193T from a factory before selling it on. Sadly GYW 613W & YHV 193T are no more, if I could turn back the clock I would, however at the time the infrastructure and storage I have today wasn't there. I had a very close call to purchasing YHV 191T having found it in a yard on a Sunday in Iver, Bucks in 1993. The following morning I went back to find it gone, taken to a scrap yard behind Blackhorse Road Tube Station, despite travelling straight up there, by the time I had arrived the chassis was already cut with the engine still warm from the drive! In the early 00's children came along and I sold GYW 614W as my priorities changed, later divorced and remarried Chris who I met at a fire rally and she has since purchased GYW 614W which attended our wedding in 2019 with YHV 187T. We also have GYW 628 & 631W which are both under restoration.

Shelvokes continue to be a main interest for us, even taking a holiday to Malta in 2018 to search for vehicles where we found two examples. We still look out for any updates with the brand as well as keeping it alive ourselves. Of course with time passing the likelihood of finding further vehicles is reducing, however as S&D reaches it's centenary, 2022 marks a personal milestone of 30 years Shelvoke ownership. My advice is simple, the chances that come your way never come along again, so grab them and make the most of it!

Best wishes, Terry December 2021.



**YHV 187 T Terry's first Fire Appliance – he was aged 17!**

## **Turntable ladders aren't for the faint hearted!**



**Devon Fire Brigade Shelvoke SPV WY Turntable Ladder.**

In a recent phone call to Mike Mullarkey, who was the SD Exeter Service Depot Manager, I asked whether they also serviced the SPV fire appliances that were operated by Devon's Fire Authority. "Oh, yes," he replied. "One day we had Torquay's WY turntable ladder machine in for service. Like so many boys I'd always been fascinated by these impressive machines. At displays the firemen looked so brave at the top of those enormous ladders squirting water onto a demonstration fire. So here was my opportunity to ask the driver if he could raise the ladder and let me climb to the top. "Sure," said the driver, "but always maintain a three point hold. i.e. only move a hand or a foot when the other three have a firm grip." So up the ladder I started, I'm sorry to admit that by half way up I thought "Enough is enough!" I realised I was glad I was into repairing vehicles – I would never have made a fireman!"

## **A PAKAMATIC AT WORK.**



I liked this photo that Ron Waghorne posted on Facebook of a Pakamatic at work, as so many of the photos are posed pictures of vehicles. This shows the days before the wheelie bin became the popular choice.

## WHAT IS THE SD ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB?

By Your Editor.



**SD Remembered -The Alington Suite Letchworth Hall Hotel Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2004 Allen Freer Photo.**

The quick answer is:- Your Editor - Brian Carpenter. But that's not the true answer. As I remember it, it was a bright Spring Day in 2002 when our elder son, David, said to me:- "Dad, why don't you produce a website?" He'd recently discovered a computer programme and realised that producing a website wasn't beyond his father's capabilities. After a Google search I decided there was a need for something about Shelvoke & Drewry where I'd served my apprenticeship and had thoroughly enjoyed nine years at the Company. So the website was launched.

By sheer coincidence on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2003 Channel 4 Television broadcast a programme in a series called 'Salvage Squad' in which a Shelvoke & Drewry PN Revopak belonging to Steve Jones from Sandown, Isle of Wight, was restored. ITV 4 carried a link to my fledgling website and a steady stream of communications arrived from people with an interest in SD. For better or worse I created the idea of an Enthusiasts' Club and in March 2003 the first quarterly paper magazine was launched at the price of £3.00 for four copies a year including postage. This continued until December 2010 when the final issue was published – numbered 32. During these eight years I did all the printing at home, addressing and posting and at its peak each edition numbered almost 200 copies. The work simply became a burden. So from 2011 an Internet based Newsletter was introduced which continues to this day. A version of the Newsletter is published in pdf form so that anyone who wants a paper copy can obtain one.

When I started the website I imagined that maybe at least 50% of former SD employees would possess computers and communication would be easy. However experience suggests that maybe the computer ownership was around the 20% mark. As a result of moving to an Internet based format contact with many former Club members has unfortunately been lost.

There are no fees to be paid to be a member of the Club and in many ways it continues as a 'One Man Band'. In 2004 a reunion was organised in Letchworth which attracted a capacity participation of 200 people. The following year we had a display of preserved vehicles at the Bedfordshire Steam & Country Fayre and in 2006 a more low key event at the Grange Community Centre in Letchworth. Through the Club SD had a display at the Letchworth Garden City Industry Festival in August

2009. In 2009 & 2010 a limited display of vehicles were shown at an annual rally at Edenbridge. In 2011 the Club assisted with contact details to permit a former SD apprentices gathering to take place.

In 2016 a Facebook Group was launched :- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sdenthusiasts> At the time of writing this has 567 members registered. A further group of people are notified by email when each new Newsletter is published. This goes to 126 addresses of which 54 are former SD employees, 17 relatives of former SD employees and 55 people who have a general interest in the Company.

The Club website is at [www.shelvoke-drewry.co.uk](http://www.shelvoke-drewry.co.uk)

In order to organise an event in 2022 to celebrate the founding of the Company a small Organising Committee has been set up consisting of five former employees plus Mr. Josh Tidy from the Museum at One Broadway, Letchworth Garden City.

It has been pointed out to me that it is very unusual to have such a flourishing Club for a company that ceased trading 30 years ago. Believed to be unique in the Letchworth area and in the form it takes very rare in the U.K.

In reality the Club is its members. Beyond those with fond memories of working at Shelvoke & Drewry there is an international interest in a highly respected Company. A quick look at the excellent website Classic Refuse Trucks published in the U.S.A. may give a reader an insight into the fascination of the vehicles commonly known as 'dustcarts'. See:- <http://www.classicrefusetrucks.com/>

**Brian Carpenter.**

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2021.**

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

**Next Issue :- 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 Spring Issue.**



# SD 100 THE TOP TEN SHELVOKE & DREWRY ACHIEVEMENTS.

Your Editor's Personal Choice. PLEASE let me have your comments. Brian.

10



## THE ICKNIELD WAY FACTORY.

Here the main entrance to the offices is decked out for the 1953 Coronation. It was a well designed building and the high wall to the front of the premises indicated a substantial company and made an attractive part of Icknield Way.

The oak panelled board room reflected Harry Shelvoke's particular taste.

09

## THE SPV WX FIRE APPLIANCE.

When SD ceased production of fork lift trucks in 1974 the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Division was formed. It was found that the all steel cab introduced in 1978 for the 'P' series could be modified to form a fire appliance cab.

In 1979/80 SD supplied a total of 48 WX Pump Escapes to the London Fire Brigade with bodywork by Cheshire Fire Equipment (CFE). Many of these were later modified to Pump Ladder machines. The vehicles were well regarded by the London Fire Brigade.



08



## THE 'T' TYPE PAKAMATIC.

In 1959 Tom Tillson A.M.I.Mech. E. joined SD from Dennis Bros as Chief Engineer. In a remarkably short time he led the design of the 'TY' Pakamatic shown on the left and such was the urgency that 100 sets of parts were speedily ordered. With a glass fibre front to the cab, aluminium alloy body and a packing mechanism built under licence from the French Rey organisation the Pakamatic saw SD's U.K. market share increase from 33% to 66%. SD's board showed great wisdom in appointing such a high class Chief Engineer.

07

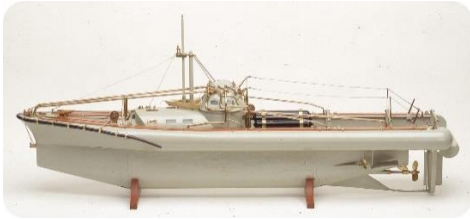
**THE REVOPAK.**

Under Tom Tillson's guidance the Revopak was the replacement for the Pakamatic in 1971. With its rotating crusher tines the Revopak could demolish bulky refuse at an impressive rate. It was carried on 'T' series, 'N' series and 'P' series chassis right up to the end of SD in 1991.

The example shown is a PNL Revopak.



06



Despite having no ship building experience SD were entrusted by the S.O.E. from Welwyn Garden City to entirely manufacture the Welfreighter Submersible pictured in model form above.

**WAR PRODUCTION 1939-45**

SD's output during the Second World War included:-

- 30-ton Tank Recovery Trailers.
- 40-ton Multi-wheel Tank Transporters.
- Radar Equipment Carriers.
- The Welfreighter Submersible for the S.O.E.
- Engine Room Gear for Landing Craft (including 2,800 cylinder blocks, 2,480 governors, 45,000 welded exhaust pipes.)
- Driving Mechanism for Churchill Tanks, including more than 56,000 tank sprockets and wheels.
- Bodies for 17-pounder Anti-Tank Guns.
- Bomb Hoists for Bomber Planes.
- Undercarriages and Landing Gear for more than 8,000 Aircraft.

05

**The SD 40 Club**

In 1968 the SD Board of Directors considered that the time had come to recognise the long service of some of their employees. I have letter addressed to Jim Morley, a Service Engineer, from the M.D. Morris Davenport telling him of the formation of the SD 40 Club for employees with over 40 years service. It is noted that in 1946 70 employees had completed 21 years service with the Company.

Harry Shelvoke has the reputation of being a stern employer, But he engendered a loyal workforce.



04



**The Freightlifter.**

The Freightlifter heavy duty fork lift truck came into production in 1952. It was developed at the request of the London Brick Company as an addition to their two American Hyster fork lift trucks when they were refused permission to import any further Hyster trucks.

A completely new product for S&D found a ready market, and the Freightlifter soon achieved a high reputation for its ruggedness and design. London Brick went on to have a fleet of 170 SD fork lift trucks.



03

**The 'W' type Fore & Aft tipper.**

With the cessation of the Second World War in 1945 it soon became apparent to Local Authorities that the amount of refuse they were collecting was increasing and becoming less dense than pre-War refuse. Most Councils were using side loading vehicles without any compaction system for the refuse.

SD's response was the development of the Fore & Aft tipper based on a Faun design. Several of the Company's competitors produced similar designs but SD created a reputation for the quality and long life of its product. This was the fore runner of modern compaction systems.



02



**Apprentice Scheme**

Your Editor's Uncle, George Carpenter, became an SD apprentice in 1924 – possibly SD's first apprentice. Throughout its history S&D trained young men to become engineers and a good proportion of its workforce had been trained by the company.

Training methods changed over the years and the 1950's system of one day at Technical College plus one evening class with the other four days moving through the various departments of the works to be trained under the foreman of that section was superseded by more formal module training. SD also trained people for office work, and as joiners etc.

01

**The SD Freighter**

The SD Freighter whilst appearing somewhat eccentric was an extremely ingenious design and well in advance of the competition for a light lorry capable of carrying a 2 ton load. The tiller controls were unusual, but easy to learn to use. The gearbox was automatic, the stepped chassis and small wheels gave a low entry height and a low loading height for the body. Power driven hydraulic tipping was an advanced feature in 1922. All lubrication was automatic.



**There's Much More to S&D than could be listed in a Top Ten List.**

**30 Years after its Closure people still are interested in Shelvocke & Drewry.**

It's pretty amazing that thirty years after the Company closed following a number of sad years of significant decline in its fortunes, those who were employed by the Company continue to look back with gratitude to their time at as apprentices, service engineers, draughtsmen, office workers, demonstrator drivers etc. and many have shared their memories in these pages. The SD Freighter continues to fascinate, the Fore & Aft tipper, Pakamatic and Revopak are remembered by many who saw them as small boys. An impressive number of vehicles have been preserved with many awaiting restoration.

For a relatively small Company this on its own is an achievement.

**The Humour of S&D.**

Moving SOON BENCH AREA TOP SALE.  
DOWNE LOCKER £3 = 50  
LARGE COAT WITH HANGER £1 = 50  
BENCH LITTLE USED 50P  
ODD PARTS & BOLTS GOING BACK 50 YEARS  
FREE WITH COMPLETE SALE.




The photo on the previous page sent in by the late Peter Shuttlewood depicts 'Big Fred' Halford's work bench when he was moving to a different part of the works. "1 work bench – little used 50p" is the inscription. Another photo in my possession shows the rear of the 1,000th Pakamatic built. Here the inscription reads :- " Never was so much achieved by so few for so little!"

Humour was the 'oil' that lubricated the daily life of the SD works enabling very different characters to get along with one another.

### The Courtesy of Shelvoke & Drewry.

For me the following letter encapsulates the way the Company treated others with courtesy.

	<p><b>MUNICIPAL VEHICLE range</b>  <b>Shelvoke and Drewry Limited</b>  <b>Municipal Products Division</b>  <b>Letchworth Herts SG6 1EN, England.</b>  <b>Telephone: Letchworth 6555</b>  <b>Telex: 825556</b></p>
<p>Mr XXXXXXXXXXXX  XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  XXXXXXXXXX</p>	<p>THURSDAY,  25<sup>th</sup> August, 1977  Our Ref: CK/ML</p>
<p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>In connection with your telephone call made to our Sales Department, we have pleasure to enclose our Sales leaflets showing the current range of Revopak Refuse Collection vehicles, currently manufactured by this Company.</p> <p>As you will see, we have also enclosed our Intapak leaflet, which shows our recently introduced intermittent loading vehicle.</p> <p>For your further appraisal of our vehicles, the leaflet headed "The Range" shows you the number of types of special purpose vehicles we manufacture.</p> <p>We trust that the enclosed literature is to your requirements. However, should you require any further detailed information, please do not hesitate to contact us.</p> <p>You as mentioned, you are in the process of making a model of an SD Revopak. We would be grateful if you could forward us a photograph of this model on completion. This being for our record purposes only, we are,</p> <p>Yours faithfully,  for SHELVOKE AND DREWRY LIMITED.  C. Kirk.  Sales Department.</p>	

### The Social Side.



**A 1960's Trip to Walton-on-the-Naze.**

In addition to a Christmas Party the children of SD employees were able to go on a Summer outing – I have photos of them off to Wicksteed Park. Trips to London were organised to see shows and a regular trip was to Hamden Park for the soccer international against Scotland.

### Sporting Activities.

The Company played an active part in the local Inter Works sporting activities – bowls and soccer being popular.



**This photo is of SD's 1963 Inter Works Cup Winners.**

This list could go on and on and on. The manufacturing of the Latil Traulier, the moving floor body, SD takers for gully emptying and cesspool emptying, the efficiency of the Drawing Office Alteration Notes etc. etc. It didn't take a lot of thought to draw up the list.

2022 is our opportunity as SD Enthusiasts to celebrate Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd. I'm hoping that I'll see many of you at Gaydon in June and at Letchworth in the Autumn, as we celebrate the courage of Harry Shelvoke & James Drewry in backing the little Freighter by forming their own company to produce the ingenious light lorry.

**Brian Carpenter.**