



# SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

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## From the Editor.

We have received so much news about vehicles that are still in existence that almost two pages are devoted to them in this issue. But we also have the fascinating story of an SD stalwart and the memories of an HGV fitter. I hope you'll enjoy the read.

*Brian Carpenter. 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011.*

**Contents:- This page:-** SD's in service and in particular the 'N' series. **Page 2.** Features Existing Vehicles and **Page 3.** continues the theme. Plus items of interest to former employees. **Page 4.** Tells the story of Edwin Robson.



**Steve Jones** sent in this photo of a 1978 'T' reg 'N' series Revopak in service with the City of Westminster. He writes that almost the entire fleet in Westminster were 'N' series with the first Revopaks in service in 1971. This photo was taken at Picadilly Circus on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1985 and you may notice that a small door has been cut into the nearside door, presumably so the driver can see the kerb. Originally the cabs were painted maroon.

It's always good to hear about SD's in operation and **Derek Coulson** has written:-

I served an apprenticeship with a local authority from 1976 working on all types of vehicles and plant. I was subsequently employed as an HGV fitter primarily on the Cleansing side. At the time, the workshop had two sides, Cleansing and Engineering, with a couple of service bays and an area occupied by a Plant Fitter. A separate bay had a welder and his assistant.

We had around 20 refuse trucks of which probably 8 to 10 were S&D, generally P and R registration N types, but we had a baby S & D for farms as well. The rest were mainly Dennis, but in the early days there were a couple of old Glover and Webbs and a Seddon/Jack Allen (SAM). There were some P type automatics joined the

fleet towards the end of my time there – I left in 1983 to become a service engineer for a sweeper company.

I got my HGV licence and was allowed to drive trucks. S & D's were better to drive than most of the Dennis's, other than an old Paxit where we had swapped the engine from a Leyland to a Perkins 6.354, and hadn't changed the gearbox or diff – it was a flying machine.

I recall going to a breakdown – we had a Transit with a tiny crane on the back, and attended an S & D with a badly broken front spring. We didn't have a proper breakdown truck so jacked the chassis up and put a block of wood between the axle and chassis and drove very gingerly back to the yard. It was the early 1980's, wouldn't dream of it now.

The rakes used to wear out, so we had a spare that was repaired with new teeth, the welding procedure needed special rods and the fume was terrific. We got quite adept at changing the rakes. This was the days before wheelie bins, so a common job was removing metal bins that had been caught and got trapped between the teeth of the rake and body. Drivers liked the S & D's, they were substantial vehicles. They also used to be regularly overloaded, when they started tipping at the incinerator plant they were weighed and were often over 18 tonnes.

Clutches didn't last long – this was before automatics came into regular use. A regular job was to get a truck steam cleaned on an afternoon, then get the gearbox out before tea break at 8.45, change first and second gears and change the clutch and get the box back in before lunch at 12. Box it all up and test it before tea at 3.15 and take it back to the depot to test it.

I always had a soft spot for N types, and would love to see one preserved...

This photo by **Jaap Mikkers** shows an 'N' type still at work in Malta in 2009.



## VEHICLES IN EXISTENCE.

### S&D in the DAILY MIRROR.

On 7<sup>th</sup> July readers of the Daily Mirror under the heading 'I've bin everywhere' were able to read a report on Steve Jones' fascination with dustcarts. Spread over pages 28 & 29 Euan Stretch recalled how Steve used to go out with the local dustmen when on holiday. A selection of photos showed Steve on holiday often alongside a Shelvoke. Another picture is of him driving his restored ex-Isles of Scilly PN Revopak **SCY 786 X**.

Sadly Steve had hoped the article would tell of his desire to re-patriate a Shelvoke 'N' series from Malta which has long been a dream for him. But it was the 'Life is rubbish for Steve' angle that fascinated the journalist. However the article has generated some interesting leads for Steve.

The Guardian on 9<sup>th</sup> July picked up the theme under "Rubbish Holidays."

### FOR SALE.

There has been quite a bit of activity for anyone interested in purchasing a Shelvoke. Ralph Crow put his **two SD Freighters** up for sale as he no longer has space to store them. I understand that one is going to the Ambereley Museum as spares for their replica Tramocar whilst Mark Kennedy from County Down has purchased the other. This Freighter was new to Kendal Corporation and the other to Whickham Council which is near Gateshead. Ralph purchased the two Freighters in 1982. They had been used by Associated Lead Ltd. in Newcastle.

In Cumbria a **Shelvoke SPV Fire Service Training Vehicle** was advertised for sale in July. This 1982 vehicle has covered just 8,000 miles. With a V8 engine, automatic gearbox, 13 ton chassis and a crew cab the vehicle is fitted with high speed low profile tyres. Due to illness the owner is unable to complete this refurbishment project and is asking £8,500 for the vehicle.

A purpose built Shelvoke and Drewry transporter Reg No. **ANO 169 X** which was originally a **Turntable Ladder** in Essex with its 6 man crew cab and sleeper pod and has only covered just over 40,000 miles from new is for sale in Swindon. It comes complete with a very rare solid tyred 1918, ex London Fire Brigade Leyland Pump which is complete and awaiting final restoration. Hence the asking price of £20,000.

The owner reports that there is no urgency to sell and a "Good home" is the primary requirement for this complete kit.

### Shelvoke SPV's re-united at Derby.

On 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> June at the Derby Fire & Rescue Show ex-London Fire Brigade Shelvoke SPV Fire Appliances **YHV**

**186 T** and **YHV 187 T** were reunited some 32 years after leaving Letchworth.



**YHV 187 T Photo by David Carpenter.**

Terry Prince brought **YHV 187 T** up from Ruislip to the Show. I'm told that the vehicle looked magnificent following extensive restoration work. My son, David, was impressed with the comprehensive equipment carried by the appliance.



**YHV 186 T photo by David Carpenter.**

Sister vehicle **YHV 186 T** was brought from Stockport by the Robertshaw brothers. Both appliances carry wheeled escapes as originally supplied to London Fire Brigade. Sadly your editor was unable to attend the show but was delighted to receive photos from the weekend.

### THOSE SD FORK LIFTS.

Kevin Green alerted me to the fact that an SD Defiant fork lift truck was to be found at the South Yorkshire Transport Museum and on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> August I visited the Rotherham based Museum. Here I met Duncan Osbourne who is highly enthusiastic about the truck. I was able to give him information about the truck and S&D that was new to him.





This smart looking SD Defiant truck has recently arrived at the South Yorkshire Transport Museum at Rotherham. The manufacturer's plate tells us that the truck was built in 1972 for the military. It remains in full working order nearly forty years after leaving Letchworth. If it could talk it surely would have some good stories to tell. And if S&D were still in existence what a great advert it would make for S&D's legendary quality and long life. **Photo kindly supplied by Kevin Green.**

Even older is this 1956 Freightlifter pictured in Malta. The manufacturer's plate again reveals it to have been an ex-military truck. It was photographed by **Peter Skerry** in the yard of Bezzina.



### ANOTHER SURVIVOR.

It's quite amazing how often another SD survivor is reported. **Peter Johnston** sent in this photo of a gully emptier owned by a Mr. Young in Cornwall. Clearly it needs a bit of work but looks to be a nice little vehicle. Anyone know any more about it?



In the meantime Peter Johnson has been busy purchasing an SD 'W' type. He tells me that it was a fore & aft tipper but the body has disappeared. The vehicle is going to require extensive restoration. Light grey in colour the vehicle has a petrol engine and a crew cab with the registration number **2217 IJ**. Peter is looking for an Instruction Manual for the 'W' – photocopies would do. Can anyone please help?

The vehicle had been stored in a hay shed for the last 30 years. It was supplied by McCreath Taylor & Co. Ltd. to Bangor Borough Council in County Down possibly in 1959.

It has been good to have such a bumper crop of news about SD's that have escaped the fate of the Breaker's Yard.

### OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO FORMER SD EMPLOYEES.

#### ALEX TAYLOR.

We were sad to learn that **Alex Taylor** died on 22<sup>nd</sup> July at the age of 86. A well liked and respected member of the Company Alex was responsible for sales of fork lift trucks and for sales of the specialist vehicles designed by the SPV Division which was created in 1974.

Alex had been in poor health for a number of years. Former SD employees were among the congregation for the funeral service at Harewood Crematorium, Stevenage on Thursday 4th August.



This photo from 1976 shows from the left:- Alex Taylor, Sales Manager Special Purpose Vehicles, Len Newman,

Sales Manager Municipal Vehicles Division, Stanley Quin, Managing Director, Basil Barber, Sales Director, and Tom Hall, Export Manager.

### EX-SD APPRENTICES REUNION LUNCH.

The reunion organised by Bob Bowker will take place on Saturday 26th November where a Lunch has been arranged for Ex-SD Apprentices at Letchworth Golf Club.

The Lunch will comprise of an inclusive two course carvery to be served at 1.00PM. Meet at 12.30PM.

The cost will be £15 per head which is required to be paid in full by Monday 21st. October 2010.

I can give you Bob's contact details. Bob tells me he is indebted to Stanley Quin for facilitating the arrangement with the Letchworth Golf Club. Those of us who had the good fortune to be SD apprentices owe a lot to the Company and I hope to see many of you there to remember our younger days.

## AN SD STALWART.

### EDWIN ROBSON.

When Edwin Robson retired from S&D in 1969 he had clocked up a remarkable 42 years of service in the Company and was almost 70 years old. As a draughtsman he played a key role in the design of many successful vehicles. On his retirement he was chief of the Project Department.



**Mr. & Mrs. Robson are pictured with SD's Chairman and Managing Director Morris Davenport.**

Edwin's son, Jeff, has written:-

"My father was the kind of man who could not easily leave his work in the workplace and as a boy I vividly remember him sitting at home with cardboard shapes of vehicles and linkages trying to solve a design problem that he could not get out of his mind.

He was also one of those now rare people who cycled to work for the whole of his working life and although he spent so long in the Automotive Industry never had a car or learned to drive.

In retirement he was unfortunately very limited by the effects of a stroke, but despite this was thrilled to be able, with lots of help, to go with other SD pensioners on an organised day trip to Paris. He died in February 1972."

Edwin Robson was a keen sportsman and a founder member of the Letchworth Swimming Club in 1934. He later became President of the Club and was also President of the Hertfordshire Swimming Club.



Edwin Robson is pictured with the SD cricket team of the late 1920's or early 1930's. He is the furthest left of those seated on chairs.



This photo from 1963/64 shows a Pakamatic undergoing trials.

Jeff concludes:- "I still have his SD 40 club tie which he used to wear with great pride."

My thanks to Jeff for sending in all this interesting history of his father.

### **THANKS.**

My thanks are due to the many people who have contacted me and without whom this Newsletter would be impossible.

The next Newsletter will be on the Website by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

**Brian Carpenter – Editor.**

**The 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)**

**Brian Carpenter – Editor.**