



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Summer 2012.

From the Editor.

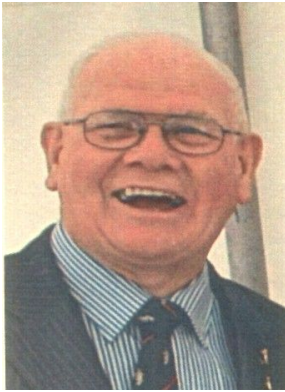
In this issue we have the first of a series of articles by Bill Thornycroft who was instrumental in the creation of the replica Tramocar in the Amberley Working Museum. Marios Demetriou writes from Cyprus with his memories of S&D and sadly we have a number of deaths of former employees to report.

Brian Carpenter 1st June 2012.

WE'RE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Hitchin's Spiritualist Church was packed on Wednesday 23rd May for the funeral of **Graham Lambert**. Graham died very suddenly and un-expectedly on 10th May at the age of 79. The large gathering of family, friends, neighbours, former colleagues from S&D and ex-military friends of Graham's demonstrated the wide respect and affection in which Graham was held.

Trained as a graphic designer at the Medway College of Art, Malcolm found it hard to understand why his ideas for future SD vehicles weren't welcomed, but in later years he describes his input into the styling of SPV vehicles. A fascinating article with photos of some more unusual designs from S&D, including the aircraft loading vehicle shown below.



Graham started at S&D in the Welding Department and moved on into the Service Department. Always ready with a smile, a joke or an amusing story Graham made many friends at S&D. Later he left to form his own successful vehicle maintenance Company and through that work kept in close contact with former colleagues.



Photo provided by Shaun Taylor

Graham was an exceptionally good neighbour and also was involved with the Grange Community Centre for many years. In recent years he was instrumental in making sure everyone was aware of the formation of the SD Enthusiasts' Club, and we owe much to him for the way the Club has developed.

Malcolm writes in his usual unique style, and whilst we may not agree with all he has to say, he provides a fascinating insight into how the Company developed its specialised vehicles.

Your editor was pleased to be able to be among the many who gathered to honour Graham and express our condolences to his family.

Classic & Vintage Commercials May 2012.

Although it's nearly 21 years since S&D closed we have been reminded of the important part the Company played in the lives of so many people. In recent weeks two publications have also reminded their readers of the Letchworth company that produced high quality vehicles for almost 70 years.

Peter Johnston's SD Freighter features over four pages of the May issue of Classic & Vintage Commercials magazine. Photographs show in some detail the restoration work carried out by Jimmy McAleer of Fintona Co. Tyrone. The Freighter is now in the livery of McCreath Taylor Ltd. of Lisburn.

Vintage Road Scene April 2012 Issue 149.

Michael McRitchie tells some of S&D's history and of the appeal of the Freighter to the British haulage industry. He also gives an account of the history of this particular vehicle and on the ease of driving.

Malcolm Bates has written of some of his memories of S&D in an article in Vintage RoadScene and in a letter in the same issue.

It is pleasing that the specialist press continues to keep the SD name alive.

My S&D Memories. Part 1. Worthing's Little Red Buses.

Bill Thornycroft.

As a young child I lived in Worthing. When we went down to the sea front we would see curious little red buses with 'SD' on the front and the word 'Tramocar'.

It must have been about 1932 when I was just learning to read that I first wondered: "S & D – what could it mean? Did it stand for Southdown? ... but they were red, not cream and green." It wasn't until some thirty years later that I learnt that S & D stood for Shelvoke & Drewry.

Where we lived was far beyond the Tramocars' territory and we were served by several proper buses – double deckers normally, but sometimes the 'relief' would be a single deck Tilling Stevens Express. I was very fond of them too – but that would take an article of its own. We hardly ever rode on the Tramocars, but they did pass my sister's school in Shelley Road and were a very common sight, especially after the second route was established. I

remember it was soon diverted to serve the new super cinema, the Plaza, in Rowlands Road. Most Worthingers were fond of the Tramocars. My sister called them 'Guinea Pigs'. She had a Guinea pig which she called 'Cleopatra' which did, indeed, bumble along in rather the same fashion as the Tramocars.

Worthing was the only place to have a substantial fleet of S & D's as buses. There were fourteen in all, though the last two were very different with rear engines and painted green and cream, as they were delivered after Southdown had bought out the Tramocar Company.

They were the brain child of a Mr. Gates. It is said that his wife was arthritic and had trouble with the high steps of buses. He probably realised that there was a potential for successful bus services to the West of the town. Southdown had been refused licences by the Council for this area, it has been said on the grounds that the heavy vehicles would cause distress to the gentle folk of Worthing West and Heene.

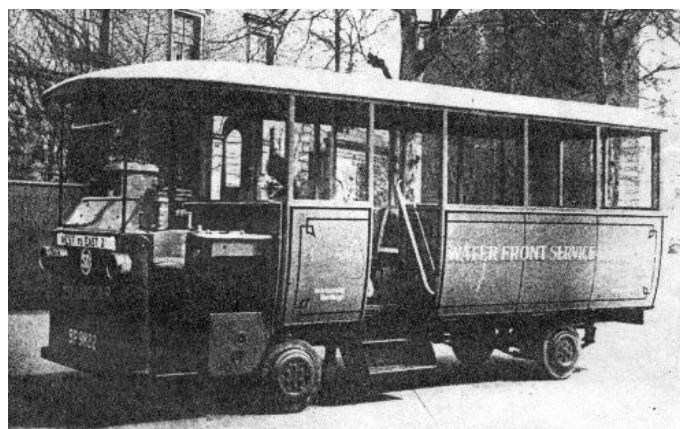
Mr. Gates persuaded the Council on the promise that the vehicles would be much lighter and 'silent running'. [Anyone who has been to the Amberley Museum and heard one, admittedly past its first flush of youth, can hardly believe that they could ever have been silent.]

Many years ago I had the good fortune to meet the man who drove the first Tramocar from the body builders, Hickman Body Building Co. of 8 Grove Road Balham. He collected it on Derby Day and as his route took him that way he gave some people who were walking to Epsom lifts! When he got to Worthing he was instructed to put



The replica Tramocar on Worthing sea front in 2004

the bus in a building in the Council yard where it was to be locked up over night with clean paper on the floor underneath, to see it did not drip oil. The Council also feared that oil on the streets could also upset the locals. Our informant said he bribed a Council worker to change the paper before the inspection took place next morning. It no doubt passed this test with flying colours.



The first Tramocar at Hickman's Balham.

I think I realised that S & D could not mean Southdown as soon as I noticed that the Corporation dustcarts had the same sign on the front. So too, did the Worthing Rural District Council ones though they were painted a rather attractive deep red or maroon. They were to be spotted far, far afield trundling along the highways or byways of West Sussex going to collect remote dustbins in Ambereley, Steyning etc, etc.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO FORMER EMPLOYEES.

Since the publication of the Spring 2012 Newsletter we have learned of the deaths of five former employees.

Arthur Moss.

With regret we learned of the death of Arthur Moss at the end of February. Arthur was aged 92. He was a long serving highly skilled worker in the Joiners' Shop. In later years he was in charge of carpentry maintenance and those who worked with him remember him with affection.

The funeral service for Arthur was held at Stevenage Crematorium on Tuesday 6th March.

Peter Lear

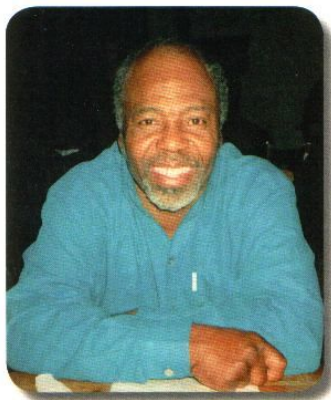
Peter Lear died on 3rd March at the age of 83. Peter came to S&D in April 1962 as a service fitter. Jack Arnold was his foreman. When the Service Dept. moved into the ex-Hands trailer factory Peter was one of the chargehands. Later he was closely involved in preparing vehicles for their M.O.T. test, and was proud of the fact that over a twelve month period only two failures were recorded – one for an air leak and the other for a cracked body bracket.

Peter played bowls in the Inter Works League and in the annual match against the London Brick Company at Stewartby. In his retirement Peter continued to enjoy bowling.

Peter was in poor health for a number of years and his funeral took place at Luton Crematorium on 23rd March.

Joe Wynter

On 12th March Joseph Nathaniel Wynter died at the age of 65. The father of Howard, Alison & Jenise Joe was popular with those who worked with him.



The funeral took place at Walworth Road Baptist Church Hitchin on 30th March attended by a number of Joe's former colleagues.

Douglas Flint.

We were also sorry to learn of the death of Douglas Flint who worked in the Tool Room.

Douglas died on 31st March aged 66. The funeral was held at St Peters Church, Arlesey on 12th April and a number of his former colleagues were able to attend.

Through the Newsletter we offer our condolences to all those affected by these deaths. To have cheerful and hard working colleagues who took a pride in their work has been the privilege of many who worked at S&D and we remember these fellow workers with gratitude.

✉ THE EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

By E-mail from John Williams Melbourne Australia

Hello Brian,

Our S&D is now placed in a prominent position for the public to view. I understand there were a number of people interested in viewing it and asking questions. It certainly looks great. I am thinking of writing an article about it for the magazine since you sent me some time back photos of it before delivery and under test. If the magazine is interested I would ask if you would check what I come up with before submission.

Regards, John.



The SD 'W' type alongside a lot more modern fire fighting appliance at the Pint Cook R.A.A.F. Museum.

Photo credit: 'Civil Aviation Historical Society. Essendon Airport'.

By E-mail:

We have a Shelvoke & Drewry Freightlifter for sale. Are you interested? Or do you know someone? Photos available. Please contact Griff at the following address. Sportwapens@amerikaansstockhuis.com or jessysom@amerikaansstockhuis.com phone 003234806870

From CYPRUS.

I felt the need to send you this e-mail in memory of the good old days when we were assembling the REVOPAK refuse body and fitting it on our KMC vehicles during the late 70s early 80s.

When I finished my studies at the North East London Polytechnic in 1977, I came back to Cyprus and joined the KMC company. The Company was the first and only OEM Truck manufacturer in Cyprus, a member of the SMMT, specialising in the manufacture of buses and special vehicles from 1969 to 1996. When I joined the company I was in charge of the application dept, then I became the Operations manager and a couple of years before closing down I was the general manager.



Photo supplied by Steve Woodward in 2004.

From 1996 until now I am the co-owner of M.A. Cycoach Ltd. coach builders specialising in the manufacture of bus bodies and other special vehicles mainly Fire Engines.

In around 1978 we started a co-operation with S&D by purchasing from them in CKD form the REVOPAK body and fitting it on our KMC chassis which was based on the Dodge 100 series. I was a very good friend with the

export sales manager at that time, Tom Hall, and with one engineer (unfortunately I cannot remember his name at the moment). They were visiting Cyprus almost every year since we built quite a few units for the local municipalities.

Best regards

Marios Demetriou

By E-mail from Malta.

Hello Brian

Thanks for keeping me updated . Unfortunately things are changing here in Malta and it is bound to happen that many old refuse trucks that have be obsolete years ago in UK are now being retired due to emission laws, age of vehicles and expensive tariffs at the tip leading to owner drivers either retiring or else investing in modern RCV's with on board weighing systems the order of the day for many commercial outlets. These used RCV's are bought from UK and given another lease of life here.

I have seen an SD defiant which is still used occasionally to shift empty containers in a private yard I've only got a glimpse of it once and will try to get a photo of it.

Regards Tony Cauchi

By E-mail Following the picture of a Pakamatic body on a Ford D 750 chassis:-

Hamilton Burgh Council had one Ford/SD combo, I can remember it was quite a job pumping up the crew cab to get at the engine.

Regards Bill Tait

A STORMY RECEPTION.

In 1982 when the Isles of Scilly PN Revopak Reg No. **SCY 786 X** was completed the sale was felt to be so unusual that S&D's Publicity Manager, Malcolm Bates, was sent by train to Penzance to photograph the vehicle being loaded onto the ferry for its trip to St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly. The vehicle had to be hoisted aboard as roll on roll off facilities weren't available.

Malcolm duly recorded the event. The plan was that Malcolm would travel with the Revopak to St. Mary's. But there was a storm in the Atlantic and it was forecast that the passage over would be lengthy and very uncomfortable. Malcolm enquired about a helicopter flight over, but the flights were grounded. So Malcolm didn't get to see this machine land in its new home. You can understand why Malcolm is always pleased to see the vehicle in its restored state some 30 years later.

The Shelvoke & Drewry Enthusiasts' Club Newsletter is published four times a year 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)

Brian Carpenter – Editor.