



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Autumn 2012.

From the Editor.

In this issue we have the second in the series of articles by Bill Thornycroft who was instrumental in the creation of the replica Tramocar in the Amberley Working Museum. Sadly we have further deaths of former employees to report. We have readers' letters and an interesting account of a Freightlifter at Barnstable. I've enjoyed putting another newsletter together. I hope you enjoy reading it.

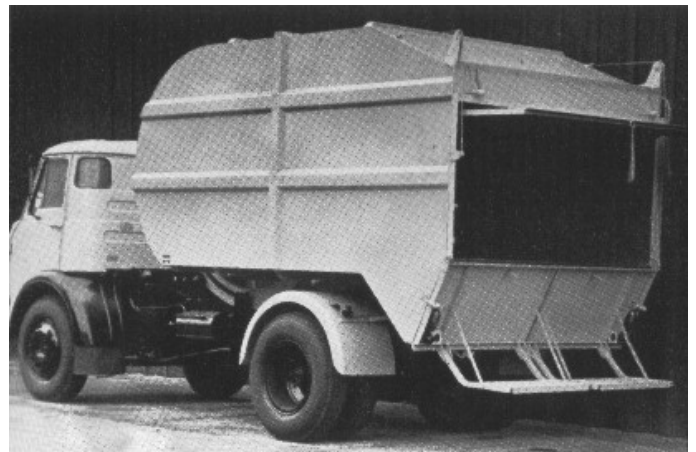
Brian Carpenter 1st September 2012.

Have I finally flipped?

I found myself asking: 'Have I finally flipped?' on a rare sunny day in early July. I was visiting my younger son in Manchester for the day and asked him: "Are we far from Warrington?" When he replied that, no, we weren't too far away, I explained that I'd had an email from Kevin Green. He reported that from a train window he'd spotted an S&D Fore & Aft tipper body in a scrapyards alongside the railway line.

My son looked up the Google Earth map and from Kevin's description he located the scrapyards. So that afternoon we drove over to Warrington. The last yards of the journey were down a narrow track, through a very low bridge under the railway, a sharp right turn and there was the scrapyards. The owner wasn't there that day but a very pleasant gentleman asked our business. He couldn't believe anyone wanted to see the dustcart! I could hardly believe I was there myself! But, yes, there was a dustcart – right at the far end of the yard, of course. So we passed the rows of sad cars that had once been someone's pride and joy. We dodged the puddles, the oily pools and the assortment of scrap – and there it was!

son and I. Many people will tell you that S&D gets into your bones. Knowing that a 'W' Fore & Aft tipper is being restored I just couldn't pass over the chance of finding some spares. But I did ask myself: 'Have I finally flipped?'



A Dual Tip seen in better days.



"That's not a Shelvok!" I said to the astonished gentleman "It's a Glover, Webb and Liversidge Dual Tip." Well actually it was mainly rusted steel. We were told that the body had survived a fire in the scrapyards a few years ago and there it had remained.

Kevin had done a remarkable job in spotting this relic from the past from a train window. A shame it wasn't an S&D 'W' type but it made an interesting afternoon for my



Following on from the photo in the last issue of the aircraft loading vehicle Roger Morrisroe sent in this picture of the vehicle after it had been re-bodied for collecting refuse for re-cycling. Who knows if S&D had continued these low entry cabs might have become a familiar sight.

Roger supplied a series of photos of some of the last vehicles produced by S&D.

Thank you Roger.

My S&D Memories. Part 2. SD's in Preservation.

Bill Thornycroft.

My own first experience at the tiller of a Freighter was in the 1960's. The Borough Engineer of Epsom and Ewell had a dream of setting up a museum and had saved two of their S & D dustcarts for the this purpose. But the Council was abolished under the local government re-organisation in 1965 and it became amalgamated with other surrounding areas so that the Borough Engineer's dream of setting up a museum was shattered. One of the vehicles **BPL 73** was given to the Worthing Historic Commercial Vehicle Club and I took the other **DPF 432**.



On the day I went to collect the Freighter I found that the nearside front tyre had a nasty split in it but the Council workers assured me it would get me home and they put a bit more air in it, which made it bulge even more menacingly. However we towed it very slowly with a Wolseley 6/80 and got to just before the cross roads opposite Tooting Broadway station when the tyre burst and we leaped into the air and came to rest with a very flat tyre but on the pavement! Luckily no-one was there and apart from my nerves no-one was hurt. We managed to get the tyre repaired at a garage in Garrat Lane and eventually crawled to Broxholm Road in West Norwood. As in those days the street lamps went out at 11.00 pm. we parked in the road and tied a hurricane lamp on it. Any vehicle on the road was supposed to have two white lights at the front and one red at the back, which also illuminated the rear number plate. The next day I managed to start it and drive it into my back garden.

At about the same time I visited Colin Shears' collection of old vehicles at Winkleigh. I purchased a very derelict S & D dustcart chassis from him which he subsequently delivered to my back garden all for £25. That is the chassis under the replica Tramocar body at Amberley Museum.



DPF 432 in Bill's Garden in West Norwood.

A Trio of SD's at the Edenbridge Rally in 2010.

When in 1943 I moved to London I found that many of the local authorities there had Shelvokes. They were very popular with such councils as Hammersmith, Poplar etc. If you refer to the publication 'Freighters on the Front' by Davis Kaye you will see that of all the little, small wheeled makes on offer for refuse collection, S & D were by far the most popular leaving Vulcan, Guy etc. well behind.

It was only after I got to know the working of a Freighter that I realised why they were such a success. The promotional literature claimed that they could be learnt by any man who was accustomed to driving a horse in twenty minutes. Being semi-automatic, the driver does not have to worry about changing gear, double de-clutching etc. He just moves the lever from brake, through neutral into first, then second and then third speed, keeping the throttle pedal pressed firmly to the floor. To stop he just takes his foot off the throttle and swings the speed control lever back to brake. It is not only simple but even the worst driver can do little damage. There are no gear teeth to break or clutches he can damage – they are all automatic and work regardless of the driver's skills. With their very low chassis height, they often ended their lives as trailers or had compressors and other road mending items mounted on them.



The London Borough of Hammersmith converted this Freighter chassis into this trailer seen here in 1967.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO FORMER EMPLOYEES.

Sadly since the publication of the Summer 2012 Newsletter we have learned of the deaths of four former employees.

Roy Rowland

By letter received the sad news that **Roy Rowland** has died. Roy, who lived in Stevenage, was a Demonstrator driver for Shelvokes from 1977 to 1987. Demonstrator drivers performed an essential job in securing ongoing orders for S&D.

William (Bill) Negus

Bill Negus died on 24th May at the age of 76. The funeral service took place at St. Michael's Church, Letchworth Garden City, on Tuesday 12th June.

Along with Nick Baldwin Bill Negus wrote Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry which was published in 1980. Anyone with an interest in S&D is greatly indebted to Bill for the part he played in the production of this valuable volume. Writing in the book Bill tells us that he joined S&D in 1973 as part of the sales team. In an old part of the factory he found a room full of early photographs and catalogues. Since he was interested in history he soon found himself acting as an unofficial archivist and historian. He began giving lectures about the history of S&D and answered the many queries that arrived at Icknield Way from all parts of the world.

He gathered recollections from retired employees and tracked down unidentified photos. Having written a potted history of S&D Bill was delighted to collaborate with Nick Baldwin when Marshall, Harris & Baldwin Ltd., decided to produce Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry.

We are so fortunate that the book was produced at a time when memories were still fresh going back to the early days of Shelvoke & Drewry. Along with all those mentioned on this page we mourn Bill's passing and in particular are thankful for his diligence in preserving S&D's history.

John Hill

John Hill, who was a very popular and respected member of the Service Division died on Sunday 10th June. The funeral service took place at Stopsley Crematorium on Tuesday 26th June. John was an S&D apprentice and rose to become Superintendent of the overhaul department. Nine former employees of S&D attended his funeral.

John Holt

We were sorry to learn that **John Holt** has died. The funeral took place on Thursday 9th August at Stopsley. I believe that John spent his entire working life at S&D, including being an apprentice. He was an important member of the Service Department team. He also served on the Apprenticeship Committee.

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 Email.

Hello Brian,

I didn't know about the SD Enthusiasts' Club until Bob Bowker organised the lunch for ex-apprentices last November. Unfortunately I learned about it too late to attend, but it's been good getting in touch with you after almost fifty years.

When I started my apprenticeship in 1956 I was following in my brother Steve's footsteps. Steve worked the long Lang lathe that turned the mast cylinders for the Freightlifter fork lift trucks.

My journey through S&D was machine shop first, then gearcutting, vehicle assembly, sheetmetal work with welding and a short while on the gully emptier area, final trimshop, engine test, heat treat and finally jig and tool design. The last job was with you in the Planning Office. I left S&D in 1963 to join Borg Warner. While I was there Bob Edlin gave me a job offer to return to S&D which I turned down, but my boss at Borg Warner increased my salary when he heard about this. Good old Bob!

I then moved on to the Ford Motor Company where I remained until retirement. I installed new plant all over the world for Ford.

Some names I remember from my years at S&D are :- John Bryant, Frank Miles, Sandy Pierson, Bob Bowker and Peter Shambrook. If any readers remember me I'd love to hear from you.

Joe Wilson.

1920 Lacre Roadsweeper



Whilst going on holiday to Kent in June I took the opportunity to visit the Stondon Transport Museum. In addition to a fine collection of cars the museum houses two Lacre roadsweepers. The one pictured is a 1920 model designed by James Drewry and produced when he along with Harry Shelvoke were employed by the Lacre company. The vehicle features Drewry's patented designs which display the ingenuity that he used in designing the SD Freighter.

The later roadsweeper on a Bedford chassis was also designed by James Drewry. The museum is well worth visiting for anyone with an interest in Shelvoke & Drewry.

TWO MORE SURVIVING SD FREIGHTERS.

On Saturday 25th August two SD Freighters were on offer for sale by auction at Red House Farm, Elmstone Hardwicke, Cheltenham. They had been the property of Mr. Wallace Margrett who died at the age of 95 some 5 years ago. Mr. Margrett spent his entire life on the farm and was always interested in mechanical things. He carried out all his own maintenance and he never threw anything away, so a remarkable collection of farm machinery, tractors and agricultural equipment was offered for sale.

The two Freighters were purchased from Cheltenham Borough Council, and a copy of the letter when he tendered for these with a purchase price of £32 survives. His family remember that as children they had such fun driving around the village making the tin indicator finger work! And with a little adaptation the Freighters made excellent grain trailers.

One Freighter has the Registration No: **DG1043** and was first registered on 20th August 1930. The Chassis/Frame No. is 071145

The second bears the Registration No: **ADG 704** and was first registered on 30th November 1935 (Maroon) The Chassis/Frame No. is 502042. It was being sold with modern V5, Original Registration Book, and a Tax Disc expiring 31st December 1940 with 42,862 recorded miles.

Some spares were offered in a further lot. The catalogue states that the Freighters were stored in dry conditions. I do hope these Freighters found a good home.

MEMORIES OF A FREIGHTLIFTER DUALDRIVE

By David Vinsen.

The attached photograph may be of some interest being of a Freightlifter parked at Barnstaple railway station. I think it was taken sometime between 1979 and 1981 when I worked there but since I spent a fair amount of time there as a youngster (you could not really call it trainspotting, not enough trains to spot!) it could be earlier. Someone has suggested that it was a late survivor and it was the only one they had seen to make it into yellow. Its main use at Barnstaple was to unload steel plate for Appledore shipbuilders. Unloading the narrower plates carried on flat wagons was a simple process – a crowbar under the plate, attach clamps and lift onto a road trailer, or stockpile in the yard. Some plates, however, were wider and carried at an angle on trestles on the railway wagons. In this case attach clamps to the top edge, lift plate so it is hanging vertical, prop plate against an old container (little metal bodied one kept in yard of the pre ISO shipping type) then round to the other side of the container and nudge the top of the plate over the top of the container with the lifting bracket so the plate falls flat on the ground. On the odd occasion when I smell diesel fumes I am taken back to crisp autumn mornings with the Freightlifter revving in the yard 30 and more years ago.



The yard at Barnstaple had a fair amount of business at one time with the Freightlifter also being used to unload other traffic such as cast drainage pipes and rotary muck spreaders. I just saw the end of the general freight business. I think what killed a lot of that sort of business off was when the railway stopped providing cartage from the stations. I can remember going home stinking of fishmeal having unloaded a box van of hundredweight sacks of the stuff. I do not think they are even allowed to have sacks of that weight nowadays where manual handling is involved. Happy days! Sad that so much of our manufacturing industry has ceased. One of the blokes I work with was an engineer and he laughs about telling his son, "When I was your age I can remember when this was all factories".

Best wishes,
David Vinsen

**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)
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