



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 2. Issue No. 11.

Autumn 2013.

From the Editor.

I believe I have two fascinating features for you in this issue of the SD Newsletter. From Northern Ireland Peter Johnston has sent news of two restorations, and former SD employee David Potter has written to me about his model making project. Then I have your letters and a few memories of my own. Now read on ...

Brian Carpenter 1st September 2013.

Page 2. The last SD Built? News from Northern Ireland.

Page 3. A 'P' series in miniature.

Page 4. the Editor's Postbag.



When Mark Kennedy from County Down, Northern Ireland, arranged for a double decker bus to be used as the commentary point at the annual Cultra Hillclimb at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum on the 1st June, he was disappointed when the bus was unable to attend due to an oil seal leak on its rear axle. But Peter Johnston stepped in with his SD 'P' type and Mark reports: "It worked very well and the commentators had a clear view of the course." The above photo reveals that with a Freighter on the back the vehicle looks more impressive than any double decker bus.

The Cultra Hillclimb is the world's oldest active speed hillclimb and involves historic cars racing uphill against the clock. This year's event especially featured lady drivers.

CUNNING TRICKS.

The story in our last issue about Harry Shelvoke's attempts to fool the Bank Manager reminded me of similar ploys used to try to secure sales of the ingenious but unusual Freighters the company produced. To promote sales to municipal operators a group of Aldermen and Councillors would be invited to view the vehicles being manufactured in Letchworth. Harry would take his guests to the chassis assembly line, where if orders were scarce some of the chassis would be

chalked up with fictitious customer names, but one would be left blank.

When a prospective customer asked where this chassis was designated Harry would go over and speak to the Foreman. He'd return with the name of a neighbouring authority. In this way the council representatives desire to keep up with their neighbours would be called into play.

Another ploy was to to ask the Foreman to start the engine in a chassis, only to be told: "It's already running, Mr. Shelvoke" thus emphasising the quiet running of the engine at tick over speed.

When in the 1930's hydraulically operated dustless



shutters were introduced for the Chelsea type bodies Harry Shelvoke was very impressed by the way the shutters glided to a slow halt over their last three inches of travel. So he would place an egg on the loading rave and demonstrate that the egg remained unbroken when the shutter stopped against it.

Clever salesmanship allied to a unique design concept and quality of engineering production enabled S&D to survive the harsh economic times the country experienced in the early days of the company.

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)

Next Issue :- 1st December Winter Issue.

Brian Carpenter – Editor.

THE LAST SD BUILT?

As we go to press McCreath Taylor's 'W' type Fore & Aft tipper has just completed its restoration. When Malcolm Bates saw it when it was almost completed he remarked that it was far more than a restoration and should be regarded as the last SD built. First registered in 1959 **2217 IJ** was supplied to Bangor Borough Council in County Down. Around 1970 Mr. Jimmy Kennedy of Millisle acquired the vehicle and then it passed to Mr. William Tease of Newtownards who dry stored it in an open hay shed for about 20 years.



This is how the vehicle looked in the summer of 2011 when about to be removed for restoration. The cab was completely rotten, the fore & aft tipping body non-existent, but just two years later the vehicle is resplendent again in McCreath Taylor livery. Extensive work was carried out on the engine, chassis and running gear by James McAleer of Fintona assisted by many people in resourcing the numerous parts required. The achievement is to the great credit of the workmanship of James McAleer and the vision of Peter Johnston and his son, David, to see this vehicle restored.



Peter Johnston has also been busy getting a tar boiler restored. In the 1920's McCreath Taylor were involved in the importation and distribution of tar. The business extended into supplying equipment required by Councils and led to the company becoming agents for S&D.

A road contractor, possibly a quarry owner, would place small piles of half inch chips along a road awaiting a fine spring or summer day. The road surface would then be swept clean, the pot holes repaired and the grass verge trimmed with a spade. The tar would be supplied in 40 gallon drums and heated in the tar boiler.



The tar was then transferred to the tar spreader which is mounted on an SD Freighter in the photo below.



The tar boiler, sometimes referred to in rural areas as a Tar Pot, makes a fine addition to Peter Johnston's beautifully restored SD Freighter which has featured in previous Newsletters. It is so good to learn of these historic items being so beautifully and carefully restored.

In the picture to the left James McAleer holds the cab door and David Johnston is at the steering wheel.

A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT COMPANY.

It seems to be natural that organisations tend to attract like-minded people. Thus S&D was formed by those who in its early days could tolerate the eccentricities of Harry Shelvoke with his high demands and dislike of the Trade Unions, or people for whom the Company's policy of paying only modest wages was less important than job satisfaction. A Company that throughout its history by training its own apprentices ensured that there was a commonality of understanding about how things should be done. Many, like me, who were employed by S&D have very fond memories of our years with the Company. David Potter is one such ex-employee who clearly remembers his years at S&D as happy times in his life. In working at S&D, David was following in his father's footsteps, as many sons (and daughters) did. John Potter, David's Dad started at S&D in August 1966 and worked in the Tool Room until being made redundant in May 1981. David came to S&D in the early 1960's and worked in the Stores becoming a Leading Hand. He returned to S&D in the late 1980's where again he worked in Stores and later as a Progress Chaser until being made redundant in July 1990. David has now retired and last September set about making a replica of a three axle Revopak.

he loses track of time when at work in his shed. The electric tools that he used, without which he could not have made it, were a Hegner fretsaw & a Proxxon table saw.



A view of the completed replica.



These two photos give some idea of the details incorporated into the replica.

David writes: "It is not a model as it is not to scale and because it is made out of wood" so that's why I've used the term "replica".

The model is no tiddler. It measures 28ins (71cm) long x 11ins (28cm) high (including exhaust stack) x 8 1/4 ins (21cm) wide. David made it in his workshop which is just 1.6m wide and 2.5m long. It used to be a storage area for garden equipment and bikes. The workshop is unheated so can only be in use for about 8 months a year. David thinks it took him around 3 months to make the replica, but he says he has no idea of hours he spent making it as

Over the years David has built up a collection of SD brochures, service manuals etc. All reminders of the happy times he spent at S&D. He tells me that he recently did a car boot sale in Hitchin and was delighted to meet other ex-SD employees especially his old boss – David Stratton. David comments that it isn't easy to remember names, but he can remember faces. After all at one time S&D employed around a thousand people. But not many will have David's skills at producing this fine reminder of the Company that once was.

LATIL

The remarkable four wheel drive, four wheel steer Latil KTL tractor was built at S&D between 1932 and 1937.



Tony Peacock from Pontefract sent in this fine photo of Peter Berry's 1937 Latil tractor unit. It is unclear whether this vehicle was one of the last built by S & D or by the London concessionaires.

LATIL TRACTOR UNIT AT THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL VEHICLE MUSEUM LEYLAND, LANCs.

My thanks to **Chris Heaps** for sending in an interesting cutting from 'The Automobile' of June 1984.

This vehicle which appears in the livery of Tate & Lyle started life with Wraggs Timber Merchants of Hereford and lost its original cab when the fuel tank under the seat blew up. "One hopes no one was aboard" the article notes! A Mk II cab was fitted but when the vehicle was restored this was altered and the winch removed. At first the Museum didn't show the vehicle believing it to be of French origin, but research revealed it to be one of the last built by S&D.

Back in 1984 Christopher Randall ran the Latil Vehicle Register from Ramsgate but I've been unable to trace that organisation today. In 1955 Latil became part of Renault's SAVIEM combine.



By email

Brian,

Hi. Interesting reading. Re Australian fork lift truck. I remember a petrol version on the production line, and I think it was for export, but cannot remember if it was 1960 or 1962 onwards after my National Service. The petrol engine for the forklifts was basically a bored

out road engine, bored from 98mm to 4". There was most likely other changes to allow for the increase in power. As a coincidence the newsletter arrived on the same day as my sister-in-law from Australia, and she knows of Mudgee in NSW.

All the very best, **Roger Morrisroe.**



By email

Hello again Brian,

I have just read the bit about the Freighter being sent out and driven around in sight of the bank, then returning to base to be repainted and sent out again in a different livery to give the impression of a company worth lending money to!!

I thought that was a classic - and actually a very clever play!!!

All the best, **Steve McFadden**



By email

Hi Brian,

Thanks so much for the Newsletter, always an interesting read.

A couple of incidentals to the report of David Jones's recent sale of his TN

I delivered this vehicle new to Bacup Council back in 1972, so you can imagine my surprise when, several years ago I found it residing in Hitchin! It is also a film star as it featured as a backdrop in the "Salvage Squad" programme some years ago.

Hope you are well

Regards **Barrie Woods**

EXISTING SD VEHICLES.

When eleven years ago I re-kindled my interest in Shelvoke & Drewry I would have been amazed at how many of the company's vehicles have survived. A recent count has shown that approximately 13 Freighters are still in existence, 9 'W' types, 12 'T' types, and 3 'P' types. Around 14 fire appliances and 11 Latils (Although no more than four of these could be S & D built.) Several Freightlifter and Defiant fork lift trucks have survived. And until recent years many SD refuse collection vehicles were still operating in Malta.

These vehicles are in various states of preservation and it has proved difficult to keep up with changes of ownership etc.