



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 2. Issue No. 14.

Summer 2014.

From the Editor.

For the first time since the introduction of the Newsletter I've needed six pages for this issue as so much is relevant to recent events. Future issues will revert to the normal four pages. Below are some items that have been received since I last wrote. On Page two we pay tribute to Bob Edlin who died in March, page three features some interesting Latil tractor units, and Page four reports on how Malcolm Bates has been recalling S&D in Vintage Roadscene magazine. On Page five I write about an April holiday on the Isle of Wight, and on our final page there are more items from the mailbag. I do hope that you'll enjoy this bumper issue.

Brian Carpenter 1st June 2014.



I chose this picture sent in by Jaap Mikkers because I especially like the SD 'W' type as it brings back so many memories of my years at S&D. But also I liked the way the SD's were lined up in Hackney beside two Pagefield vehicles equipped for lifting Paladin containers. The picture also reminds us that local councils normally placed repeat orders. Two fore & aft tippers reflect the sunshine alongside a gully emptier.

Planes, Trains and Automobiles.

A book by Dan Kieran Published by John Murray.

Dan Kieran has written: "An engineer is an artist, because you've got to be able to imagine this thing before you create it. And a scientist, otherwise it will break. But he's also got to be a philosopher, because good engineering design has to have an intellectual integrity." I like that and thought you might too.

Bill Smith, whose father, Ken Smith, was Superintendent of the Joiners' Shop has written:-

"The sense of belonging and teamwork was very real at S&D, nowadays companies often strive to get that feeling

back, but if it doesn't come from the ground up it's no good."

The Drewry Railcar.

Malcolm Easton has pointed out that in the last issue I incorrectly stated that:- "the Drewrys were not involved in the production or development of railcars beyond 1911." Charles S Drewry, who founded the company, was in fact on the Board of Directors of Baguley Drewry Ltd until his death in 1929 at the age of 86. He was apparently very active until 2 years before his death and therefore very much involved with the development of the railcars.

My apologies for this error on my part.

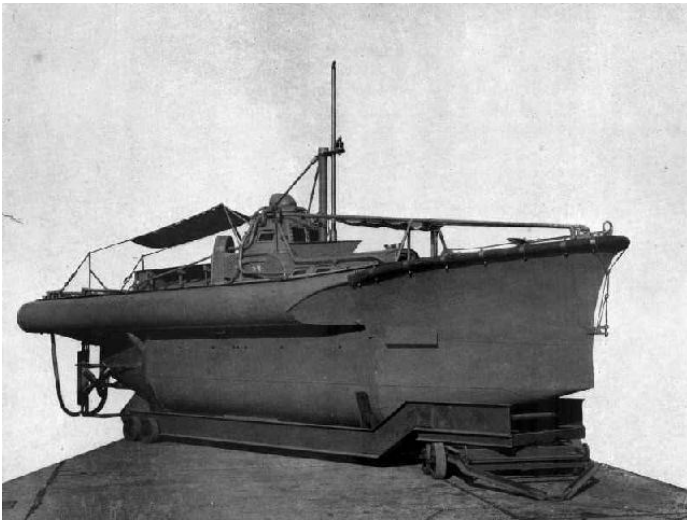
BOB EDLIN.

By the Editor.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Bob Edlin on Sunday 30th March. Bob was aged 89 and died in hospital in Devon. He had been in poor health over recent years and had been lovingly nursed at his home in Newton Abbott by his partner, Margaret. We offer to Margaret and to Bob's family our condolences.

Bob started to work at Shelvoke & Drewry in 1941 and spent almost his entire working life at the Company. As an apprentice he proved to be a ready learner and soon became involved in welding techniques. In this he assisted in the design of the tank transporter trailers which were adapted to be propelled by Diamond T tractor units.

When S & D were awarded the contract to produce the submersible Welfreighter craft in 1944 Bob was involved in the creation of the many welding fixtures the design required. He would talk with great enthusiasm about how the hull of the craft was laid out to a chalk line on the floor of the West Works and welded up. This was a very considerable achievement for a company with no previous experience of ship building.



**A Welfreighter on its construction conveyor.
Photo: Bill Smith**

On completion of my apprenticeship I worked under Bob as a Jig & Tool draughtsman for a period. Tom Tillson's design of the 'T' series was underway and Bob and Arthur 'Curly' Warren were working on the design of the welding fixtures for the Fore & Aft tipper body. Between them Bob and Curly had redesigned and simplified the body and A frame. Having had a prototype made up they proceeded to design three main welding fixtures. They assured the Works Manager, Len Gostling, that they would be able to produce eight bodies per week to the new design and using the new fixtures. In the event production eventually reached twelve bodies per week.



A 'T' type Fore & Aft tipper.

Bob then took on responsibility for the design of the new paint facility at the Black Horse Road Factory which revolutionised S & D 's painting abilities.

Later Bob was responsible for re-equipping the Regional Service Depots where he encouraged them to co-operate with one another. He called them "The Magnificent Seven."

Over recent years I have enjoyed receiving hand made Christmas cards from Bob. They often incorporated this figure.

In many ways it seemed that Bob still regarded himself as a rather cheeky schoolboy, and he certainly had a great sense of humour and enjoyed playing practical jokes on his work mates. When working with Bob there were often opportunities for laughter.



But Bob was a gifted and practical engineer and I have tried to give an account of some of those achievements of which he was justly proud.

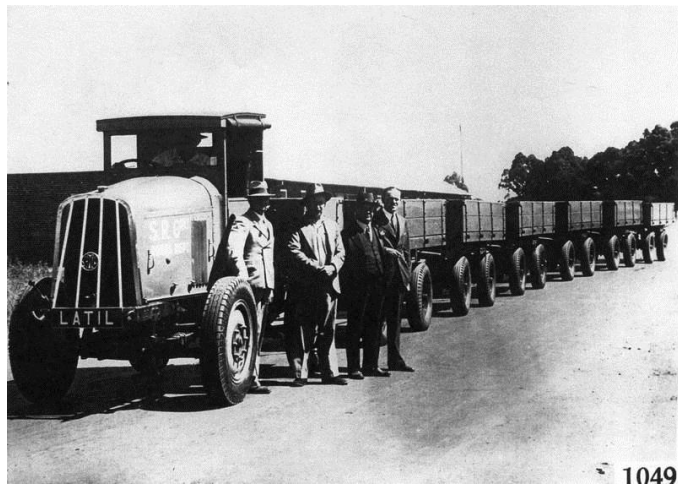
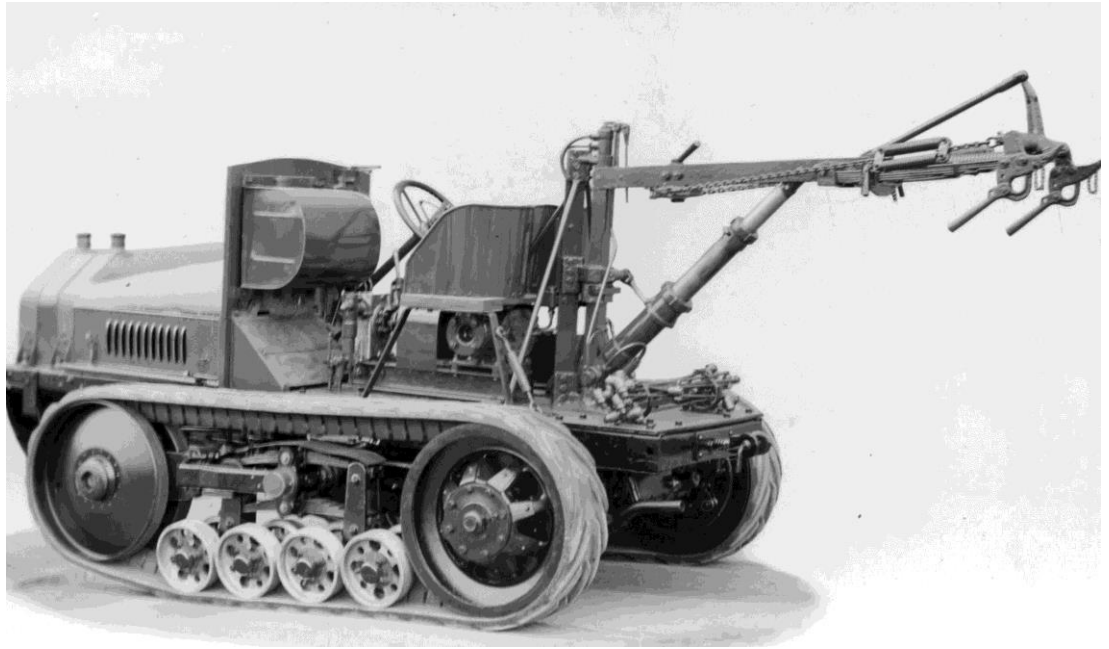
For me Bob encapsulated the qualities of those I trained with and later worked alongside at S&D. It was a great joy when I met Bob again in 2003 some 40 years after I left S & D.

Several people have spoken to me of the debt they owe to Bob for enhancing their experience of S & D. It is good to have known him.

THE VERSATILITY OF SHELVOKE & DREWRY.

When Christopher Randall kindly and generously sent me the photo on the left I was reminded that when I was an SD apprentice and studied at the Technical College in Letchworth some of my fellow students told me that SD stood for "Something Different".

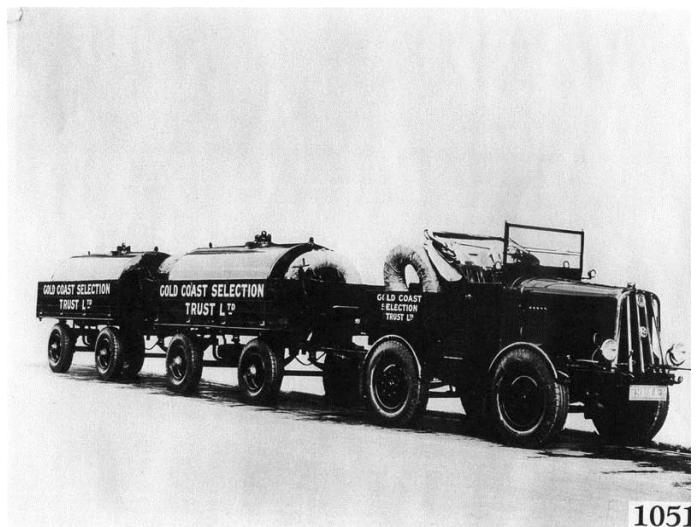
Christopher had been sent this photo many years ago when in correspondence with S & D about the production of Latil tractor units. He was told that this was a special purpose vehicle. My guess is that with its crawler tracks and strange hydraulically operated device the Latil was destined for the timber industry. After all these years does anyone know anything about the vehicle? The photo has "Shelvoke & Drewry" stamped on the back.



In the 1930's the British importers of the French Latil found that the fact that they weren't British built was a serious impediment to sales. Their Managing Director, F.A. LeVoi, found that S & D's engineering skills were ideal for producing the Latil KTL tractor in Britain and between 1932 and 1937 some 150 – 175 units were produced in Letchworth for sale in Britain and her colonies.

With its short wheelbase of 7 ft 6 ½ ins the tractor with four wheel steering could turn in a 27 ft circle, whilst four wheel drive made it suitable for off road use. The design dated back to 1922 and continued in production in Britain until 1959. In common with S & D's own products the Latil units provided a long service life. Customers included Pickfords, Charringtons, Rowntrees, Guinness and some of the railway companies, where the vehicles survived into British Railways days.

The other two photos that Christopher sent in of Latil vehicles appear to have been destined for British Colonies. The one on the left is hauling an impressive train of six trailers in Southern Rhodesia. Whilst the one below carries the name of "Gold Coast Selection Trust Ltd. and "Traulier" on its number plate.



Both these vehicles were fitted with Gardner 3 cylinder engines. Others used Meadows engines or French four cylinder petrol engines.

A fascinating part of the SD story.

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 September 2014 Autumn Issue.

Brian Carpenter – Editor.

Vintage ROADSCENE

Britain's leading road transport history magazine

For the last five months Vintage Roadscene has featured Shelvoke & Drewry in each of its issues due to the work of Malcolm Bates. Readers of the magazine have been given an insight into the Company and its products from the viewpoint of someone closely involved in publicising these products. Malcolm has outlined the relevance of Letchworth's designs in relation to their competitors. A wide readership has been reminded of the Company that we remember with enthusiasm.

April 2014 Issue No. 173

Under the title "Even More Rubbish" Malcolm completed a series of three articles.

In the 1970's the volume of refuse continued to increase and SD's introduction of the continuously loading Revopak took loading speed and performance to the next level. Faun, Norba and Glover Webb offered continuous loading with their screw compression machines but SD's product was by far the most popular. It could deal with refuse in plastic sacks and almost anything else! But as more and more refuse was finishing up as landfill journeys to the tip were becoming increasing long as new tips had to be found. One response was to increase the size of vehicles mounting them on three axles as, for example, the P series Revopak shown below.



Government plans for the privatisation of local authority activities caused a decline in the market for new vehicles as the future was uncertain. Jack Allen Municipals were eroding S&D's market and claimed that continuous loading was less fuel efficient than their Heil based intermittent loader, a claim that was untrue, but was believed by many customers.

Local authorities were attracted by "wheelie bins" because of their saving in labour costs, but the production of bin lifters was tied up by Zoeller, Otto and Terberg and S&D found it difficult to deal with these foreign manufacturers.

Malcolm clearly still mourns the demise of S&D as the era of the foreign manufacture of refuse collection vehicles dawned.

May 2014 Issue No. 174

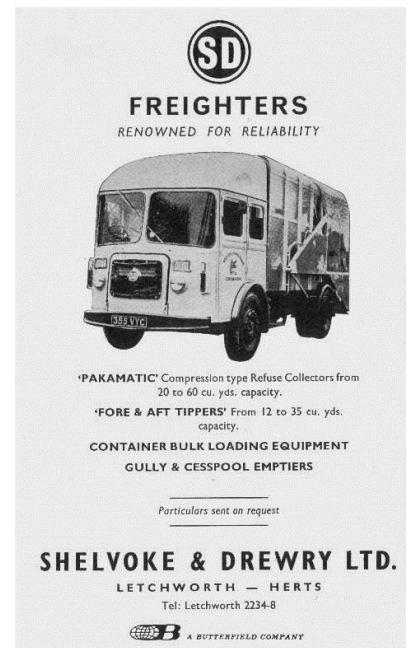
Malcolm Bates came to S&D in 1969 having been appointed publicity officer in the Sales Department by Jack Wilkinson, where he was responsible for designing and producing all the sales brochures, arranging the photographs and producing cutaway drawings for the Drawing Office.

That he succeeded at interview was something of a minor miracle. Arriving in as red three piece suit he parked his MG ZB

Magnette in the space reserved for the Finance Director; he then said he thought SD sales and service literature was "awful" only to learn that Jack Wilkinson's brother produced them for S&D as manager at the printers Spotiswood and Ballantyne. The sombre grey suited management of S&D found the young graphic designer had very different ideas from their own.

In the 1960's S&D's publicity was typically like the example shown above. Malcolm had to move it on to the use of colour and eye catching slogans. He also brought the use of colour into the demonstrator fleet with their white cabs carrying bold red and blue diagonal stripes. Malcolm's career at S&D came to an end in 1983 when he faced redundancy along with many other employees as S&D's market began to shrink.

Many of the Company's employees started as apprentices and accepted much of the Company traditions as normal. Malcolm found many things that he felt, and continues to feel, were outdated and old fashioned. Who is right? We'll never know now.



The Start of a New Career?

I imagine that everybody knows that the Isle of Wight is famous for the Needles, Osborne House – Queen Victoria's summer retreat, Cowes Royal yachting week and of course the SD 'Salvage Squad PN Revopak. So when my local coach tour operator announced a tour to the Isle of Wight for April 2014 I didn't hesitate to book my place, even though at the time it was over 12 months to wait. On Monday 14th April I duly arrived at the Shanklin Hotel at Shanklin on the island's southern coast after a full day spent on the long coach journey south. No sooner had I arrived at my hotel room than Steve Jones was on the phone: "When can we meet up?" Dates were discussed and arrangements made.



The next day, Tuesday, after a full day out that included picturesque Godshill, shown above, and immediately after my evening meal the unmistakable sound of a Revopak arriving at the hotel could be heard.

There was Steve all ready to entertain me for the evening. As darkness fell I was treated to the bin rounds that had been familiar to Steve in previous years when he accompanied the island's dustmen on their rounds whilst on his holidays before he moved to the island. A running commentary was informative and fascinating as we travelled through Shanklin to Sandown including the coast road. We drove over the deepest man hole on the island, or so Steve informed me, 90 feet to the bottom to take sewage under a hill to the treatment works. On a tricky junction by Sandown Pier I became the lookout man to cover Steve's blind spot. All too soon we were off out into the country to the farm barn where Steve keeps his two Revopaks. But I did get to experience the PN at 40 m.p.h.



Steve at the wheel of SCY 786 X

Then it was back to Steve's home to view his fabulous collection of memorabilia.

Every room is adorned with photos many of them featuring S&D and Steve carefully described the circumstances under which they were taken.

In pride of place was a signed photo of the entire

'Salvage Squad' team. Even the bathroom doesn't escape, and there sitting on the toilet cistern was a model 'N' series Revopak in the colours of Hounslow Council for who Steve had worked.

It was well after midnight when Steve drove me back to my hotel – and the next day there was more to come. More by luck than judgement the Revopak turned up on cue just as we arrived back at the hotel after our day's coach trip. Wednesday evening was my opportunity to earn my keep. We were soon off on the short journey to Isle of Wight Textiles where the boss was all ready for us. Steve came over all bossy – he was the driver I the trainee loader. Fortunately the cardboard to be loaded is light and clean and I soon got the hang of things as the Revopak's tines gobbled up the waste.



That's me in high viz vest posing for the camera. Then it was back to the hotel for a final ride in the Shelvoke which is kept in such good condition by Steve. Did I make the grade as a loader? I'm still waiting for the job offer. But it's a holiday I shall remember for a very long time.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY.

 By Email

SPARES FOR 40 YEAR OLD FORK LIFT TRUCK.

Incredibly an enquiry for spares for the braking system of a Defiant fork lift truck was received from Belgium.



The 1974 truck was described as a model HF80/10 DS13 serial HF74553. I was able to put the enquirer in touch with a specialist brake spares company. Another tribute to the long life of SD products.

 By Email

SD Freighters in Shanghi.

A correspondent sent in a photo which appears as caption 40 in Kaleidoscope of Shelvoke & Drewry. This shows a procession of four SD Freighters in Shanghi in 1927. The correspondent informed me that the photo shows the Shanghi Volunteer Corps Light Gun Battery, in 1927, during a major political crisis when the city was threatened by Chinese civil wars. Records in *Commercial Motor* show that Shanghi ordered six SD freighters in 1925, five as tippers and one a flat bed vehicle.

A very young dustcart enthusiast.

In March the newspapers reported that five year old William Bateman had bid £3,500 on Ebay for a full sized dustbin lorry when his mother forgot to log out of the site. An SD enthusiast for the future?

 By Email

Street Washing.

At one Company where I worked we had the use of a streetwasher owned by Cory Environmental, which we hired out on their behalf. It worked OK, but wasn't much use except when it was really dusty. Litter was just washed to the edges.

Derek Coulson.

 By Email

Tony Cauchi from Malta sent in two photos he found on the Internet. Both showed Revopak bodies, the first on a Ford Cargo chassis and the second two Beford TK's.



The above photo shows a Pakamatic body on a Ford D 750 chassis.

 By Email

Colin Glendinning has written in to say that his late father used to drive for Dunstable Council in the 1970's and 80's. He liked the N type Revopak and said they were good lorries. They had grey cabs.

On one occasion they were asked to dispose of a blue fibreglass Invacar. These were small three wheeled cars used by disabled people. A small tip was offered so the binmen agreed. They loaded it back end first and all seemed to be going well until the crusher reached the windscreen area when the tines jammed fast.

Back at the depot it took some explaining how the Revopak had been damaged and a rather expensive repair was undertaken. They said the Revopak could crush anything – well almost!