



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Summer 2021.

From the Editor.

Once again we have a variety of topics in the Newsletter. On this page we feature a couple of SPV's and overleaf we learn more about James Drewry. Then Derek Coulson has written about his time as a fitter with Stockton Council, and on Page 4 we continue Barrie Woods' memories, Hands Trailers feature along with an account from 1990 and news of two surviving vehicles. The back page looks forward to the celebration of the founding of S&D in 1922. We hope you enjoy this variety.

Brian Carpenter Editor 1st June 2021.

IT'S FUN IN THE MUD.



When Gordon Wilson posted this picture on Facebook I thought that I'd never seen this smart yellow Type NY 4x4 before. But in my extensive archive – thanks to you the members of the SD Enthusiasts' Club I found a re-print of Truck magazine from March 1977 and there it was – not pristine clean as in the photo above but undoubtedly the same truck. During the development of the all wheel drive range of SPV's someone at SD thought it would be a good idea to test them out at the military training ground. "Don't go anywhere near the camel section" was an officer's warning according to Pat Kennett writing in Truck. "That's strictly only for tanks." Unfortunately the SD 4x4 had already conquered that section! Designed as a 16 tonner it was accompanied by the chassis for a much more powerful Crash Tender Type CT with a cab by Carmichael seen below.

According to the magazine the un-named SD Project Engineer initially thought that this muddy experiment was a step too far. The 16 tonner had been exhibited at both the Public Works and Commercial Vehicle Shows in 1976 but had not been subjected to such a test before, but it astonished everyone by its performance in the mud. The Crash Tender had a Detroit 8V.92T two stroke engine which developed 430 bhp and so had little trouble with the difficult conditions.

At that time Managing Director, Stan Quin, was full of optimism that SD's design team could design the specialised vehicles required by customers and that the works could produce these to the high standards for which Shelvoke & Drewry was known. He wrote: "It's not as easy as you might think. Specialised parts such as axles, engines, transmission components etc. have to be selected and specially ordered. But our tradition of a two man team building each chassis puts us in a good position to produce specialised vehicles in limited quantities."

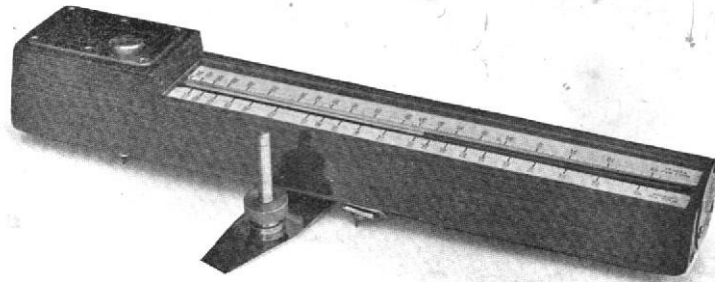
It appears that a good time was had by all mud wallowing in SD's unsinkable SD duo.



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 2021 Autumn Issue.

THE DREWRY TESTOMETER.



Through the generosity of Malcolm Easton, a grandson of James Drewry I am able to recount an unusual invention from the designer of the SD Freighter – the Drewry Testometer. I only have the Introduction to an Instruction Book that consisted of over twenty pages. Here it is explained that the instrument shown above was initially designed for the testing of the performance of road cars. However after five years of testing and modifications the instrument was found to be so accurate and dependable that it was decided to manufacture it in quantities and to offer it for sale at “a reasonable price”. The Drewry Instrument Company was formed with James Drewry’s home address – Baldock Road, Letchworth.

The Introduction explains that the instrument registers the force that is being applied to a vehicle. It was to be simply placed on

the vehicle without the need of any connections, and measured the force applied regardless of the gradient of the road on which the test was taking place.

The instrument didn’t measure acceleration directly, but the Introduction notes that acceleration could be calculated from the readings if the gradient was known. The list of contents describes the uses to which the Testometer can be put :- measuring rolling resistance, actual acceleration, horse power, or petrol consumption, brake testing, testing a road car clutch and even testing the resistance of boats.

It would be interesting to know how successful sales were of this versatile instrument.

MORE FROM THE DREWRY ARCHIVE.

Malcolm Easton found this among his Grandfather’s papers.



Malcolm thinks it may well be his Grandfather, James Drewry, at the controls of this SD Freighter. He wonders what the occasion was and what make of car is being carried. One suggestion that has been made is that it is a Phoenix. The Phoenix Motor Company moved from North London to the emerging Letchworth Garden City in 1911 into a modern factory on the corner of Pixmore Way near the Lacre factory.

The company had been formed in 1903 by Joseph van Hooydonk, a Belgian who had been badly burned as a child, and hence the choice of the name Phoenix for his Company. The company went into liquidation in 1924 but continued to assemble cars for a couple of years more. One of its cars driven by Joseph completed the six day trial in Scotland in 1922 and the Garden City Collection has several photographs of that event.

However I’ve been unable to find any photographs of a Phoenix that resemble the car shown in the photo above. Philip Clifford has suggested a Delage and the photo shown below makes it a good candidate.



In the Spring Newsletter it was suggested that Cecil Saunders Ltd., may have been responsible for some of the bodies fitted to early SD Freighters. The photo below shows Cecil Saunders’ Works in Works Road in May 1963.



A FORMER FITTER WITH STOCKTON COUNCIL REMEMBERS THEIR FLEET. By Derek Coulson.



A 'T' type Fore & Aft tipper.

We rarely receive accounts from those who knew SD vehicles as customers. So we especially welcome these memories from Derek Coulson who has written:-

My experience of S&D was at school when it was a Fore and Aft tipper that used call to empty the school bins. In 1976 I started to work for Stockton Council as an apprentice fitter, and we had a number of NY Revopaks, we also had one NY Fore and Aft. The Revopaks were far superior to the Dennis Paxit's. We had just one Seddon Allen Municipal which was quite reliable, but they never bought any more.

Next came Dennis Bulkmasters and Phoenix. The Phoenix was OK, but the Bulkmaster electrics were poor. We had one that raised the hopper and ejected the load in Prince Regent Street in Stockton because the exhaust had failed and melted the wiring loom!

My recollection is that S&D's were more reliable, but I don't have any figures to back it up. The S&D's rarely broke springs, whereas Dennis had new springs pretty much every service when they were using the tip, but less so when the Teesside incinerator plant opened. Apparently a Dennis Alleycat ended up in the bottom of the incinerator when it opened. I can't remember changing engines on S&D's, whereas we did rebuild Perkins 6354's in Dennis's.

We had a Leyland powered Paxit that used more oil than fuel, and a scrap Perkins powered machine outside in the yard. I had the job of changing the engines, and the resulting truck flew. They only kept it six months then scrapped that as well.

We used to change clutches and first gears regularly. It got to the point where we could change a clutch and rebuild the gearbox in four hours. Not when the time and motion men were in though...

We then got some PY and PN Revopaks. When I got married and lived on a new estate, one of the PN's emptied our bins. I had an old Series II Diesel Land Rover at the time, that sometimes didn't start, and on more than one occasion, the PN tow started me. I passed my HGV test in 1981 and found the NY's better to drive than the Dennis's, although the tilt cabs were better to drive than the fixed ones.

The Revopak was an excellent product, common jobs we had were burning off metal bins that the tines had gone through, I

can't remember ever having to clear jams, whereas we had Paxits that came in with things like boilers jammed in them. Our welder did have to repair rakes, welding new tines in and facing them with hard facing. We had a spare that we got used to replacing using a JCB front loader as we didn't have a fork-lift.

The rear floors sometimes needed replacing as well, mainly due to coal fires and ash that were still common, and very abrasive. When the Teesside incinerator plant opened, we had complaints that Revopaks were arriving with GVW of 18-20 tonnes, and these were all two-axle 16 tonners at the time. I'm not sure that we ever did anything about it.

Derek Coulson August 2020.



An NY Revopak City of Westminster.



A PY Revopak Wrekin Council.



S & D Memories No. 3. By Barrie Woods.

It was early 1971 I'd been at S & D a year or so, my driving licence was due for renewal. So I approached George Dawson who had taken over running the demo drivers from Gilbert Finch. My stance was that rather than me renewing with a HGV class 3 license which limited me to 4-wheel 16 ton vehicles, would he consider me for a class 1 HGV license on the basis that 6-wheel refuse vehicles were now a possibility and it would also allow me to drive everything including the artic, which was primarily used to deliver Fork-Trucks and return broken down vehicles back to the works.

The Artic at the time had a Hands built swan-neck low-loader trailer with a 16ft bed, if I recall correctly. It had four rear wheels across the very rear which when required could be withdrawn clear and the trailer lowered on Jacks, then with the addition of small ramps vehicles could be winched or driven on. The Unit itself was a Commer TS3 with a horizontal three-pot two-stroke engine with six horizontally opposed pistons. My goodness couldn't it roar at times, it was also very fast.

George considered my request and I soon found myself at the wheel of the Artic with Ernie Harmes as my tutor and 'L' plates fore and aft. What George hadn't realised was that in acceding to my request he gave me a driving license which I would retain all my working life and subsequently drove many thousands of miles in many different vehicles all over the country.

The Artic was usually kept at the rear corner of No.2 Factory, it had to be reversed all down the side of the building with racks of stores on the other side and finally parked with the rear end up against the wire mesh fence above the railway embankment I referred to in an earlier article. When required brand new fork trucks would be loaded, often by driving them up ramps laid along the side of the trailer which saved the not inconsiderable work involved in removing the rear wheels assemblies. Once on board they were chained down and wooden block pushed under the wheels then nailed to the trailer's wooden deck. Having had some experience of class 3 driving it didn't take long for me to master the rather different techniques of driving this vehicle. One early trip I recall was to a Brickworks near Horsham, possibly the Freshfield Brickworks, but I'm not absolutely certain of that. We arrived in the yard without any complications and parked up. Ernie said he's go and find the transport guy. I asked if I should start to remove the back end, he said no just removed the chains and chocks. Shortly after Ernie returned followed by a pair of fork trucks. Like a well rehearsed scenario the trucks swung around to either side of the trailer and extended their forks under the new delivery, both lifted and once high enough to clear the rear end Ernie asked me to drive forward, once clear the fork trucks lowered their prize and that was that –nice and easy!

Another trip was to the Cargo handling area at Heathrow Airport, we off-loaded the new fork truck in a similar fashion, then Ernie kindly laid out some cones on the vast apron and I had a whale of a time practicing manoeuvring, even at one point driving under the wing between the engines of a Jumbo 474!

The time had come for me to put in for my test. This turned out to be in Enfield. The big day arrived and off we went to Stevenage then the A602 & A10 to the Centre. First duty was the manoeuvrability test in a parking area with a loading bay at one end. Ernie, being a canny guy had a quiet word, relating to the reversing up to the loading bay where it was essential to stop with the very rear of the trailer within 6 inches of the vertical wall of the loading bay. "As you back up take it slowly and keep one eye on me, when I rub my nose stop", was pretty well his words. That as exactly what I did. Next came the road test so leaving Ernie at the Centre I set off with the examiner for a tour around the sights of Enfield. We were out for about 40 minutes I think. At one point he asked me to pull over and stop, whereupon he brought out the Highway code book and tested me on road signs. Back at the Test Centre he advised me that I had come up to the required standard and had therefore passed! Elation! I then said, I didn't think I had passed as I ran over a pavement with the rear wheels during one left hand turn. I probably should have kept my mouth shut, but fortunately his reply was to the effect that he didn't hear what I just said! I believe that fault was, and maybe still is, an instant failure.

The journey home was full of smiles and relaxation until near Watton an artic came the other way with the driver furiously waving his log book (We didn't have Tachographs in those days). This indicated a police Log book check up front. Suddenly we realised in all the elated atmosphere I'd not completed my own logbook. We pulled up rather rapidly and did the necessary. It could have been the shortest HGV licence ever issued! As it happened we weren't stopped.

Barrie Woods.
21st August 2020



The above photo shows the SD low loader in Icknield Way with a Freightlifter ready to be delivered to the customer. The timber clamp fitted indicates that this was possibly the Model 82 shown below.



NEIGHBOURS IN LETCHWORTH.

The advertisement shown below appeared in the Commercial Motor magazine dated 1st May 1962 when Hands Trailers were still neighbours with works opposite those of Shelvoke & Drewry in Icknield Way. For the purposes of the advert an SD Freightlifter is shown on a Hands trailer. This replicates the Hands trailer that was hauled by a Commer TS3 as described in Barrie Woods' article. The one in the advertisement appears to be coupled to a Bedford TK although it isn't thought that SD ever operated this combination.

Malcolm Bates kindly sent in this advert. When James Drewry parted company with S&D in 1935 he moved to Hands Trailers as Joint Managing Director so there was a long standing link between the two companies.

An earlier Hands trailer had been purchased to be coupled to a specially designed SD 'W' type when SD commenced building the Freightlifter range of heavy duty fork lift trucks.

May 1, 1962 THE COMMERCIAL MOTOR 53

built for the job....

for your special need safe... sure... at low cost...

Write for details to **HANDS TRAILERS**

A complete range of trailers from 3 to 30 tons in Straight Frame, Step Frame, Platform and Van Bodies to customers' requirements. Tankers, Tipper, Machinery Carriers, Patented Dual-purpose Machines, also Extendable Semi-trailers (Patent recently expired) and Pole Carriers in service at home and in 50 countries overseas.

HANDS (Letchworth) LTD., ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH, HERTS. Tel.: 1820

THE CLOUDS ARE GATHERING.

Twenty-eight years later on 21st June 1990 S&D again appeared in the pages of the Commercial Motor magazine.

At this time the SD workforce had shrunk from a high of over 1,000 people to just 194 and in June 1989 Krug International's Dempster Division had announced that Shelvoke Dempster was for sale. Managing Director, Alan Harris, pictured below thought there was still a future for SD.



Along with fellow directors Allan Morris, Finance Director and John Gill, Operations Director Alan Harris organised a management buyout which was reported in Commercial Motor. Alan Harris said:- "The possibility of a management buyout was brought within our range three to four weeks ago: We had not been involved with the negotiations at all until that point. We prepared our business plan very quickly as we wanted to complete in time to take advantage of the Institute of Wastes Management exhibition in Torbay where we announced the deal, and launched two new products."

It was envisaged that production could be maintained at 130 to 150 units per year and that it would take two years to break even with a return to profit in three years. SD was said to hold 20% of the waste disposal vehicle market in the U.K. Again a long way from the peak 60% achieved with the Revopak as the major product.

Sadly following another change of ownership the end of SD came in 1991. Thirty years ago this year.

TWO SURVIVING SD VEHICLES.



This PN Revopak has passed to Aled & Matthew Rees in Bristol from Kevin Farrington in Workington.



This 1982 WY chassis/cab was offered for sale on Ebay. It was at the Fire Services Training College at Moreton in the Marsh.

SD 100 – 2022

Plans are advancing for two events in 2022 to celebrate the Centenary of the foundation of Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd. in Letchworth Garden City in 1922.

Peter Johnston is intending to take six vehicles to **the British Motor Museum's Annual Classic & Vintage Commercial Gathering at Gaydon, Warwickshire on 11th & 12th June 2022**. He invites other owners of vehicles to take their vehicles to the event.

The Garden City Collection has confirmed that they will be organising an **Exhibition at Letchworth** to run for a period in the Autumn of 2022. An Official Opening will take place but admission will be by invitation only as numbers will necessarily be limited.

Further details of these events will be notified in future Newsletters.

Modernity Comes to Royston.

Malcolm Bates sent in a newspaper cutting from 1948.



The cutting reads:- After 30 years service the familiar horse drawn Royston dust cart will shortly be disappearing from the town. During this week it will be collecting its last 15 tons of refuse, a figure it has averaged since it was put on the road in 1912. In its place will be a 1948 model of the Shelvoke & Drewry 25 horse power refuse vehicle.

The new vehicle was delivered last Monday and will be put into operation in the first week of July. A three tonner the vehicle has a capacity of 11.3 cubic yards. The capacity of the horse drawn cart is 3 cubic yards. It is hoped that in future the work of collecting refuse in the town will only take 3 ½ days instead of a week.

A further photo shows a 'W' type with a Chelsea type body.

The cutting is a reminder that the use of horses persisted well after the end of the Second World War.

A SECOND LIFE IN MALTA.



In the Maltese sunshine a PY Maxipak and a PY Revopak wait to be transported to Bristol in this photo by Aled Rees.

Aled has written about the export of SD's to Malta as follows:- The N types as far as I know were mostly imported to Malta by the same person at the same time. They were very reliable and easy to repair so lasted out. The P types were imported for the same reason. The Dennis dustcarts of the same age had fibreglass cabs and they didn't do very well in the heat of the summer.

I met the guy in Malta who said that before the government made a push to modernise refuse collection, most collections were by open cart or lorry. He remembered taking his first trip to the U.K. on a propeller aeroplane to buy a dustcart at auction and drive it back. Something he and others repeated many times until every refuse company had upgraded to modern dustcarts. Much like the upgrade to Dennis Elite 2's that is happening in Malta at the moment.

A PT Revopak demonstrates in North Devon.



Mike Mullarkey sent in a quantity of photos. The one above shows a PT Revopak on demonstration in North Devon. Mike believes that in the photo there is a back view of the late Colin Humble. More photos will appear in future Newsletters as space allows.