



SHELVOKE & DREWRY ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

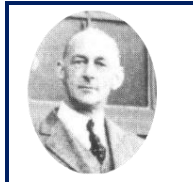
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Spring 2023.

From the Editor.

It's quite a relief to not have to worry about celebrating the Centenary of the founding of Shelvoke & Drewry which took up a great deal of my time in 2022. We have some articles to start 2023 which I hope will be of interest. Below we have more information about Harry Shelvoke that Malcolm Easton included in his excellent book about his grandfather, James Drewry. Then we have the first part of an account of how Terry Prince became an SD enthusiast early in life, and Kim Syder shares her memories with us. Sadly we have four deaths to record, and the usual news items.

Brian Carpenter Editor 1st March 2023.



Harry Shelvoke.

With the publication of Malcolm Easton's excellent book 'From Bicycles to dustcarts ... and lots more' about the life and achievements of James Drewry we also learn considerably more about his co-founder of Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd. – Harry Shelvoke.

Harry Shelvoke was born on 26th August 1877 in Ashton, Warwickshire, to George and Emma (nee Showell). He had three siblings :- Annie, Charles and George Edward.

His father George was a mail manufacturer (Mails were metallic substitutes for treadle eyes used in weaving looms.)

Harry was educated at King Edward VI School in Aston and served an apprenticeship with J. & G. Shelvoke & Co.

1897 – 1899 Draughtsman with the Wolseley Co.

1899 – 1903 Superintendent and Manager of the Cotton Machinery Co. Wolverhampton.

1903 – 1907 Assistant Works Manager and Buyer at the Wolseley Tool and Motor Co. Ltd. Birmingham.

1907 – 1909 Assistant to the General Manager BSA Co.

1910 – 1911 Works Manager at Edwin Showell and Sons, Birmingham, a brass foundry.

1911 – 1923 Works Manager at Lacre Motor Co. Letchworth. (Note NOT General Manager.)

1922 Co- founded Shelvoke & Drewry Ltd.

He married Minnie Sinigar (born 1877 died 1937) at Aston in 1901. .

Malcolm notes that although Kaleidoscope reports that Harry served in the Boer War (1899-1902) with the Staffordshire Light Infantry he married in 1901 and in the 1901 census is shown as

boarding in Handsworth, near Wolverhampton, so Kaleidoscope may not be correct. [Harry had a military bearing, was keen to employ ex-servicemen and the company's medals board has reference to the Boer War. From my memories.]

Following the death of Minnie Harry married Gilberte Louisa Delphine Josephine Beeckman (born 3rd February 1903) in 1940 who in 1939 was recorded as the housekeeper at 'Melverley' Harry Shelvoke's residence in Pixmore Way. Gilberte died in 1970.

Harry died on 24th May 1962 at Lowestoft Hospital aged 84

For me the most significant parts that contradict my previous understanding are that Harry was Works Manager at Lacre and this is confirmed by a copy of a letter from him, and the doubts as to whether he served in the Boer War.

The book also contains a detailed account of the dispute between James Drewry and Harry Shelvoke which eventually led to James Drewry leaving the company in 1935 (Pages 93 – 96). But unfortunately, so far as I know, we don't have any record of this from Harry Shelvoke's point of view and so it is a one sided account. I feel sure there's a lot more to the story.

I don't think that there's any dispute that Harry was the more forceful character of the co-founders or that he was a hard task master who expected high standards from those he employed. It also seems evident that at times he was unfair to those who crossed him. But he steered the company through difficult times in the 1930's depression and the challenges of the Second World War.

It is good that Malcolm Easton has discovered fresh information about Harry Shelvoke's life in this centenary year of the founding of S&D and we can be grateful for all the research carried out by Malcolm and his second cousin, Tony Drewry..



Martin Kelly sent in this photo from Glasgow City Archives of the Buck's Head Building at the corner of Argyle Street and Dunlop Street, in 1972. It was built on the site of the old Buck's Head Hotel in 1863 by local architects Alexander 'Greek' Thomson and George Thomson.

On the left of the photo can be seen a TY Pakamatic in service with Glasgow Corporation waiting at the traffic lights. Glasgow were a valuable SD customer over many years. The cab roof of the Pakamatic carries a salvage rack which were a popular option in the 1960's.

MY FASCINATION WITH SD SPV WX FIRE APPLIANCES. PART 1.

Terry Prince.



**WX Pump Ladder
at New Cross Fire
Station.**

**Both photos
supplied by Terry
Prince.**

In 1986 London's Burning first aired on our TV screens and this was the starting point of my S&D journey. At the time I was 11 years old, and had always been interested in lorries (my Dad had his own skip lorry, a Ford D series with Edbro skip gear) and my elder brother was a close follower of the fire engines in London Fire Brigade. The pilot programme fascinated me watching the Fire Engines and when I asked questions about the vehicles my brother could provide answers.

The Shelvokes in the film not only looked magnificent as the paintwork gleamed but they could also do a job. They carried Reg. Nos YHV 194T & GYW 628W, (the latter I would own later on in life) Both vehicles were still owned by the London Fire Brigade at the time, and were loaned to London Weekend Television (along with Dockhead Fire Station) for the film. There was something about the Shelvokes, they seemed so purposeful with the square "P" cab, later I found out they were selected because the film crew could fit in the cab along with the cast. I was hooked! Living in London what really brought the vehicles to life was that they could often be seen locally, in fact YHV 194T was running my local fire station (Southall) as a reserve appliance while London's Burning was aired. Having a film star on the manor was a big thing! Shelvokes continued in London's Burning up to Series 2 before politics interfered in questioning why public owned emergency vehicles were being loaned for film work.

I became more and more interested in Shelvokes from there on. The London Borough of Ealing had three narrow dustcarts (1988 E registration) that shared the same purposeful cab as the Fire Engines had and I would look out for them on their rounds. In 1988 an Open Day at London Fire Brigade's Ruislip Workshops provided the opportunity to get a closer look. You could drive a Fire Engine for £1.00. There were two Shelvokes for this opportunity (YHV 187/198T & an ERF), As I joined the hour long queue and approached the front, it looked as though I'd be getting the ERF, however I asked the person behind me to swap as I climbed into YHV 198T for a spin around the site. The vehicle felt so special to drive (I was 15 at the time) that I wanted more. I became a regular visitor to the workshops, as I tried to see all 48 appliances. At first I was focused on the aesthetics such as which badges were still present on the front panel (if any), was the window in the door still present (if not this

indicated an accident had previously occurred), had the blue lights been upgraded. The Shelvokes by this time were either reserve appliances or in Training School, so in order to locate them I learned what vehicles were assigned to each fire station, and would visit the workshops to see which appliances were there which would then give me a lead to find where a reserve Shelvoke may be located, I'd cycle to any station in London armed with my camera and hope for the best. By this stage it was 1990 and time was against me, the Shelvokes were the oldest pumping appliances on the LFB fleet and with a new order being placed for Volvo's, photo opportunities were considered as now or never before they were withdrawn. On arriving at a fire station and peering through the glass in the appliance bay door, it was a great outcome to see a Shelvoke sitting there (or if it had the mirrored "Shelvoke SPV" badges reflecting back at me I knew a little sooner).

By this stage I was aware that after the Fire Brigade had withdrawn vehicles, they ended up as either factory appliances, in the hands of private collectors, exported or sent for scrap. On the basis that fire engines that were in the hands of private collectors were typically Dennis and coachbuilt with ash frame, I feared that the Shelvokes could just be a memory before long. It was at this point that my brother purchased his first fire engine, a Dennis F108 and this gave me the idea - could I actually buy my own Shelvoke from London Fire Brigade?



**In 1991 Terry has cycled to Feltham Fire Station and is
pictured with GYW 631 W**



KIM SYDER REMEMBERS.

Kim Syder's Father was the well respected SD Service Manager for many years, and including his apprenticeship, was employed by the Company for over 40 years. When at College Kim found employment at S&D on two summer holidays. She has kindly written her memories of those days, which I think give a very good impression of why so many people found the Company was such a good place at which to work.

Kim has written:- I first started at Shelvoke's one summer when I was 17 in the Buying Office under Russel Spinks where I worked helping with invoices with a lovely lady, who sadly passed away, called Mavis Seymour with whom I kept in touch. Also in the office were John Leech and big Joan Taylor both of whom were very kind. But I was never suited to office work, although I could type, because I did not like sitting still, so they used to send me all over the factory to find invoices or pick them up .



Next time I worked there in was in Accounts with Freda Tassel and poor Cheddar the only chap with an office full of ladies. Again they used to send me out of the office, and I used to dislike washing up the cups because it meant going down the stairs to the shop floor. And since mini skirts were the fashion wolf whistles were loud and clear.

Freda Tassel.

My dear late Dad, as you know, had begun as an apprentice and I can remember him telling me he earned more as a delivery boy for the butchers than he did when he started work there. I also know he screwed one of the older chaps lunch boxes to the bench and got a spanner thrown at him!

Dad always said, right from my being small, that I would get him hung for the things I came out with and this happened on a few occasions at work while I was there.

One night he was called out very late at night because Stan Quin, the Managing Director's, chauffer had broken down so

Dad had to go and get them . I happened to see Stan Quin the next day and said:- "Oh glad you got home ok after getting poor old Dad out of bed ".

Basil Barber, the Sales Director, was another and I remember that he kindly came round with a bouquet of flowers when I was ill with glandular fever. We later met him in town and I had a pair of flip flops on and he said:- " What have you got on your feet Kim?" Dad was with me so I said:- "It's all we could afford - you need to pay Dad more so I can have proper shoes!" He nearly choked - as did Dad.

Dad's outside inspectors were great at doing a detour when I was in London at college to pick me up and bring me home for the weekend.

Lots of names pop up that Dad knew so well.in your wonderful Newsletter.

I can remember the girls of the switch board laughing when Malcolm Bates started being very cheeky said they wanted to announce:- "Master Bates ..." over the Tannoy but it might be too rude to mention .

So just a few anecdotes from my time there I did go to a agency one time when I thought I would have a change. " Yes" they said " We have a temp summer job for Mr Arnold." Maybe not a good plan .

I also have lovely memories of going to tea at Tom Tilson, the Chief Engineer, and his wife with Mum and Dad - such nice people. Also I remember that Ken Smith framed some paintings I had and he did a beautiful carved Heron for Mum for me another kind man .

Kim Syder. 22nd September 2022.



Martin Milmoie acquired this 1954 'W' type Reg. No. **RVO 157** in 2015. He has written:- "It was purchased by a farmer friend of mine in 1969 from a scrapyard in Kirkby in Ashfield Notts, Booths, if his memory serves him correct, for the sum of £120, It was the used for a number of years on the farm emptying the slurry pits. When the milking herd was sold the lorry was parked up in the hedge bottom until another friend, Mr Clive Ellis, approached the owner regarding a restoration of the vehicle which by now was in a very sorry state. A deal was done and a full restoration was carried out over a number of years, minus the gully emptying equipment. At some point in the restoration Clive contacted the Shelvoke Works and was told that they had in fact built a W type flatbed and somebody kindly sent him the drawings and dimensions and this is the end result. Unfortunately Clive passed away quite suddenly in 2004, so RVO 157 was parked up yet again for a number of years but at least it was under cover!"

THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO FORMER SD EMPLOYEES

JOHN JOHNSON.

We were sorry to learn that John Johnson had died on Friday 16th December 2022. In July he had suffered a severe stroke and was being cared for in Trembaths Nursing Home on Letchworth.

His daughter, Lesley Filmer, tells me that she thinks John joined Shelvoke's in 1967. He was a draughtsman in the Forklift Truck Division and this photo, which was sent in by Julian Kett, dates from the 1960's.



Back row L to R:- Jack Rowe (visiting from Municipal Vehicle Division), Tony Bottomley, Norman Frost, John Johnson.

Front row L to R:- Donald Kett, Geoff Bass, Dave Winstone, Nigel Clewitt.

When the Company closed John found employment with Marshall's of Cambridge.

On your behalf I have expressed our condolences to Lesley and to John's family.

HAYDN RUDD.

Phil Dent has informed me that Haydn Rudd sadly passed away on the 7th December 2022 after a long illness. Haydn finished his apprenticeship in 1972 and then went to work as a welder before becoming an inspector in the Machine Shop a few years later.

He worked there until the company closed down.

Many will also remember Albert Rudd, his father, who also worked at the Company in the Maintenance Department.

BILL JOHNSON

Steve Woodward has written on 8th February:- "I have just been advised of the passing of Bill Johnson at the age of 91. I remember him working in the Icknield Way machine shop in the sixties, operating a Centreless Grinding Machine. I'm sure many of the old S&D stalwarts will remember him."

JOHN MORLEY.

Chris Phillips has written to inform me that John Morley died in November 2022. John worked in the Service Department for many years, his Father worked also in the Service Department on engines etc and was the last person able to drive the tiller Freighter.



Dwayne Spencer informed us at the end of December that he has purchased this 'T' type former cesspool emptier with the intention of restoring it. The vehicle has an unusual history in that it has never been registered and has only 1,000 miles on the clock. It is believed to have been in service with the BBC.

I have identified it as a TW which indicates a manufacturing date of the early 1960's. Dwayne believes it came from the BBC in Manchester and was driven to where it is today over 30 years ago and hasn't turned a wheel since.

THANKS.

My thanks are due to Kim Syder and Terry Prince for sharing their memories with us. Also to those who have sent in news items and photos. It is only with this continuing assistance that publication of this Newsletter continues.

Brian. Editor.

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 June 2023 Summer Issue.