

OTA

ONLINE
TRANSPORT
ARCHIVE

Newsletter

Issue 11
June 2019

Welcome to this, our eleventh newsletter. From your feedback we know these regular newsletters enable you to keep in touch with our activities and we are gratified so many on our mailing list have expressed interest in continuing to receive them following the introduction of the GDPR regulations last year. As with previous editions, this newsletter includes a profile of a photographer who has passed his slide collection to OTA. This particular collection, which has come from overseas, highlights the fact that OTA does not just hold UK-based material, but has a

significant range of images from all round the world. Increasingly these are being accessed by authors and researchers on foreign subjects.

Profile: Wally Higgins

J Wallace Higgins was born in 1927 in Roselle Park, a suburb of Newark, New Jersey, USA. His father worked in sales for the Lehigh Valley Railroad, which enabled Wally to live in several parts of the US during his childhood and school days. After college and military service, he developed a career in the relatively new discipline of Operations Research and, as a civilian worker for US forces, he went on a one-year secondment to Japan in 1956.



Wally had been interested in transportation for as long as he can remember. His interests were expanded at school, where a friend introduced him to electric traction, whilst Wally taught him about steam. His first camera was given to him as a Christmas present in 1939 and he took black and white until he obtained a 35mm camera in 1950 and began taking colour slides – many of which were on Kodachrome I – when he was living and working in Alaska.

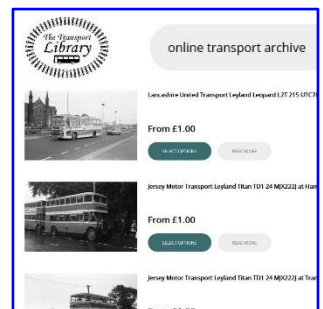
After that first exposure to Japan and returning to the USA, he was alerted to a further opportunity in Japan – this time working for the US Air Force in a civilian capacity – and went back there for a further seven years. During this time he married Hamaji, with whom he was to share over 50 years of marriage. They lived in California for 14 years but returned to Japan for good when Wally was appointed a professor at University of Tsukuba, where he worked until he retired at the age of 63.

He passed all his non-Asian colour slides to OTA some years ago. These include coverage of railways and tramways across the American continent, including US-built trams in Mexico and rare images of mule-hauled cars operating in Celaya, the latter perhaps the only surviving colour images of this rarely visited operation. His Japanese and most of his other East Asia slides and his black and white material are lodged with the Nagoya Rail Archives in Japan.

He is co-author of the three-part LRTA series *Electric Railways of Japan* (published 1983-1997) and has compiled several superb books on Japanese tramways and interurbans all of which feature his outstanding images, many captioned in Japanese. The most recent – 秘蔵カラー写真で味わう60年前の東京・日本 – contains images of Tokyo 60 years ago, and was published in 2018. Wally lives in not-quite-complete retirement in the Sakura Shimmachi section of Tokyo's Setagaya ward.

Agreement with The Transport Library

After some time in the planning, OTA is pleased to announce that an agreement has been reached with The Transport Library (thetransportlibrary.co.uk) to make copies of individual images from the Archive available for sale. Initially these are from the negative collections of Ken Farrell, Jim Joyce, John McCann and Phil Tatt plus some colour images taken by Wally Ackerman. Just added are over 500 black and white bus pictures taken by Peter Sykes, for which OTA would like to express thanks to Rob McCaffery for his meticulous work in identifying and collating relevant details. Users of the website can purchase prints starting at £1.00 each, with OTA receiving a royalty for each one sold. This agreement provides OTA with a very important additional revenue stream to contribute towards its preservation and conservation work, plus its general expenditure.



Anthony Gahan (1940-2019)

Newsletter 9 (April 2018) featured a profile of Tony Gahan who, had the time, recently passed his collection of colour slides to OTA. Sadly, Tony died on 18 March 2019 at the age of 78. He was the last of the three transport-enthusiast Gahan brothers (right – Jack, Ted, Tony) who, between them, did so much to record the final years of the Liverpool tram system. Prompted by his elder brother, Tony kept diary notebooks from the age of 12 and OTA has been able to borrow these in connection with a forthcoming book which will document the demise of this much loved tramway (see later). Extracts from Tony's contemporaneous notes, plus photographs taken by Jack and Ted, will do so much to make this book more than just a list of dates, routes and car numbers.



Publications

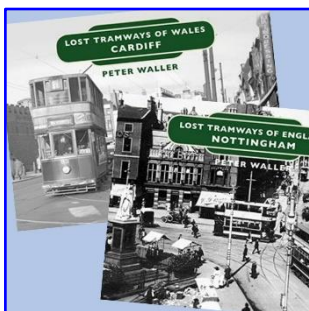
Several books are currently in preparation all of which will raise much-needed funds for the Archive. All the authors involved have donated their fees to OTA and most contributors have waived any royalty payment so that OTA will derive maximum financial benefit. Michael Russell and Martin Jenkins have been commissioned by the LRTA to co-author an all-colour dual-language album devoted to the Tramways of Vienna. They have received whole-hearted support from a number of leading authorities on Vienna trams and have selected a fascinating range of previously unpublished OTA images, the earliest dating from the mid-1950s.



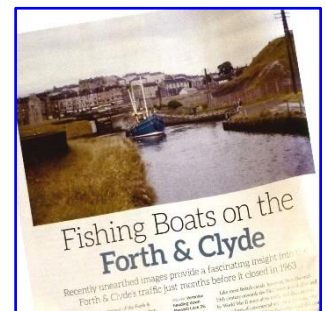
As mentioned above, a book detailing the decline of Liverpool trams after the Second World War is nearing completion and will be published by the LRTA, probably in 2020, and will include many images from collections held by OTA. Work is also progressing on another all-colour album, *Streets of the British Isles*, which has been commissioned by Pen and Sword and is being co-authored by Martin Jenkins and Kevin McCormack.



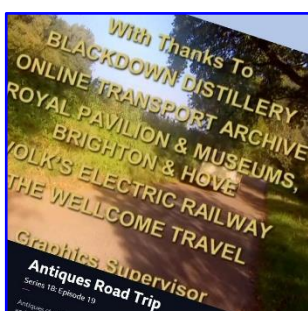
The next book to hit the sales stands from the OTA stable will be *London's Transport Recalled* by Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts, due for publication by Pen and Sword later this year. In a similar style to the authors' *Merseyside Transport Recalled* (Ian Allan, 2014), this title covers all transport modes, covering the wider London area, as defined by the extent of the former green bus network. Rare images include previously unpublished shots of a tram entering the Kingsway subway, the press launch of the first 'silver' trains on the Tube network, and evocative pictures of the Thames and other waterways, including horse powered.



Welsh publisher Graffeg is well advanced with its *Lost Tramways* series, all of which feature significant numbers of images from the Archive. Eight titles are already available, with a further six – Aberdeen, Birmingham (two volumes), Bradford, Brighton and Dundee – due out shortly. OTA images have also appeared in other recent publications such as *Die Albtalbahn* by Helmut Iffländer (pub Andreas Braun), as well as colour features in *Waterways World*, which include pictures taken by Jack Parkinson from the early 1960s onwards.



End credits



It's always worth reading the credits at the end of films and TV programmes. Eagle eyed fans of *Antiques Road Trip* on 31 January 2019 would have noticed Online Transport Archive appear in the credits, resulting from our supply of a couple of black and white still images which the producers used to illustrate old transport scenes in Brighton. A small but novel addition to OTA's public profile!

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