



Welcome

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2022. You'll notice that the format has changed – hope you like it.

For OTA, 2022 has been a busy year with the receipt and conservation of further image and film collections, digitisation of both formats, and working with authors to provide material for various books, magazines and even calendars. After a flurry of OTA fund-raising books, there is currently a small impasse, but work is well-progressed on others which, it is hoped, should appear in the next 12-18 months. OTA activity is about to get busier with the receipt of a significant financial legacy which is described below.

Main image; Vicinal trams at Souvret (Forrières) (BE), 23 April 1973.
Alan Murray-Rust

Arthur Weise legacy

In newsletter 17, we reported the sad news of the death of Arthur Weise on 11 August 2021 at the age of 91. He, and his wife Dorothy (who had predeceased him), were active supporters of many organisations and several of these are beneficiaries of bequests in his will. Arthur was a great advocate of OTA's ethos and we are honoured that the



Archive is to be one of those beneficiaries. The bequest will enable OTA to pursue its long-term objective of establishing a permanent base. Our existing facilities are fit for purpose as they stand, but being able to draw up a bespoke specification for storage and other facilities gives us an opportunity for long-term security. A working party of trustees is actively considering the various options and it is planned to make progress during 2023.

It should be stressed that the legacy will be almost entirely ring-fenced for the new premises project and will not be used for day-to-day running expenses, although certain exceptional items – see note later about digital film transfers – may use small contributions from the legacy fund. Also, additional capital may be necessary in respect of the new premises, to which end OTA has had initial discussions with national funding bodies.

Profile: Les Folkard (1932-2022)



the LRTL and the RCTS. Early pictures were taken with a Box Brownie, later ones with Zenith and Canon models. Sadly, a stroke and a fall in 2015 brought his travelling to a halt and his final years were spent in a Torquay nursing home. He died on 7 July 2022, not long after his 90th birthday.

He was an active member of a number of organisations, including the Great Western Society, the RCTS and the TLRS. Through his involvement with the Devon General Society, he was involved with authoring a couple of

books about the company, nicely completing the link back to his father's career. His collection of slides and negatives was distributed between a number of these societies.

OTA received more than 15,000 of his colour slides which have now been scanned and cover mostly overseas railways and tramways. A selection will be posted on Facebook between now and the end of the year.

[OTA would like to thank Les's sister Celia Gibson for help with compiling the above profile.]

Les was born on 10 June 1932 in Torquay and was associated with the town for his entire life. His father worked for Devon General and its coach companies until his retirement, so doubtless this had something to do with Les's life-long interest in buses, which stretched back to the age of 6, if not earlier. His interests developed into railways, tramways and others.

After obtaining good exam results from Torquay Boys' Grammar School, he went to work in the Borough Treasury Office in the Town Hall. His whole working career was spent there, until he retired as Chief Revenue Officer in 1986. He married Pauline in 1972 but was unfortunately widowed in early 1988. As a young man, his interests – as well as transport, including photography and model making – were on two wheels, firstly cycle speedway, then trials riding and scrambling. He was also very keen on Trad Jazz. He himself played trumpet and trombone in the ATC band, although he was turned down by the RAF on health grounds. In later life he was very keen on quizzes and belonged to several teams including, in the words of his sister Celia, "one very scary railway one!"

His love of travel started about 1956, and during his life he visited every country in Europe, including virtually all towns and cities that had trams. Globally, travels took him to Cuba (twice), India, Sri Lanka, Burma, South Africa, Lebanon, Canada, the USSR and many Eastern Bloc countries, some of these trips being with



RENFE Salamanca depot,
October 1965. Les Folkard



Halberstadt (DDR). Les Folkard

Profile: Alan Murray-Rust



Alan was born in 1943 and deposited his collection of slides and films with OTA a number of years ago. As a result, good use has already been made of them in a variety of publications. Alan first took an active interest in transport whilst at boarding school in York and a present of a Kodak Retinette for doing well in his O Levels in 1959 kick-started his railway photography in earnest. After joining the Liverpool University Public Transport Society in 1962, he expanded his interest into all the diverse range of transport covered by the society. Influenced by fellow student Mick Uden – who sadly died in the mid-1970s when still in his 20s, and part of whose slide collection is with OTA – Alan developed a specific interest in trolleybuses, and covered all the surviving British systems in detail over the next decade.

His working life was spent in the municipal bus sector, firstly at Reading and then for many years at Nottingham until he retired in 2008. At Reading, he worked with Mike Russell – an OTA member and for many years a trustee – and numerous joint trips were taken to continental destinations seeking out unusual tram and trolleybus operations. Whilst at Nottingham, he became actively involved at Crich. Nowadays he is a regular volunteer at the Claymills Victorian Pumping Station in Burton-on-Trent, often in period costume!

Global travels have included visits to most of Europe, North America, Australia, Asia and North Africa. He has developed a keen interest in Cuba, where



he was able to photograph the last full seasons of steam working at sugar mills and to also undertake an in depth study of the Hershey Electric Railway. These trips have continued: "... the presence of family in such far flung places as the USA and Australia has provided an opportunity to take in transport when travelling to specific family functions, such as weddings!"

Most early photography was black and white (much self-processed and printed), with colour only when finances allowed. Cameras used over the years, often in parallel for mixed format work, included further Retinettes, a Pentax, an Olympus and various Praktikas, these lasting until Alan stopped using film in 2006.

Since then, he's used digital format, with Canon DSLRs and a Panasonic Lumix, which also doubles as a video camera.

Alan sums up his approach to transport photography: "I have always tried to bring a photographer's viewpoint to my work, placing the subject in its setting rather than simply photographing vehicles at close range. Transport exists to serve its communities, so capturing those communities as well as the transport is fundamental to my work." He has kept meticulous records which are in the form of a searchable database, which is extremely helpful to OTA when responding to requests. An example to us all with our own collections!

In Memoriam

We were saddened to receive news that Dennis Gill and John May have both died recently. Our condolences go out to their families and friends. We hope to feature profiles of each of them in forthcoming newsletters.

In Brief

New collections: Recent collections which have come into the Archive include: Mike Cozens (part collection via Dennis Kerrison), Irvine Cresswell, Ian Dougill (about 100,000 slides!), Tony Gerrard (South African steam), Ted Gahan (via Tony Drury), Tony Gahan (prints and negatives, to complement the slides passed to OTA in 2017), Dennis Gill, and more material from David Gibbs and Fred Ivey. More details in future newsletters.

Film transfers: This work is progressing. OTA is grateful to Roger Manley for providing funding to support the transfer of his donated films. A small

proportion of the Weise legacy has been used to supplement the film transfer account.

Talks: Several presentations by OTA trustees are scheduled for the next few months, making extensive use of images from the Archive. These include a double presentation by Martin Jenkins to the TLRS in Liverpool. This is now scheduled for Monday 20 February 2023, the previous date having to be postponed because of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Check the TLRS website to book for this event.

Books: Recent OTA-commissioned titles continue to sell well and receive good reviews. *Glasgow Trams: a Pictorial Tribute* (Pen and Sword) and *Transport Recalled:*



North and Mid-Wales (Pen and Sword) provided features for local papers in their relevant areas. Work has begun on illustrated volumes looking at the railways of North East England and buses across Scotland.

The trustees should like to thank all of our followers for the support they have given during 2022, whether helping with OTA work or simply by buying publications connected to OTA. We would like to convey our best wishes to everyone for the forthcoming festive season, and a healthy and fulfilling 2023.



0-6-0PT 4666 on LCGB railtour in Devon,
28 February 1965. Les Folkard

