

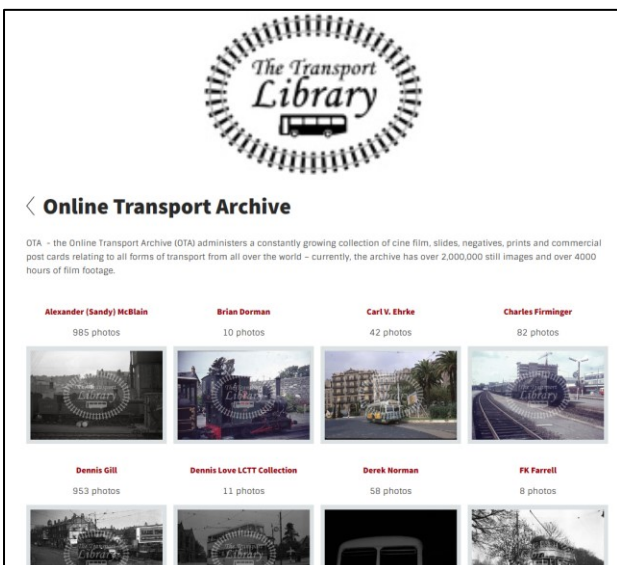
**United Counties 969 (KNV342), a 1954 Bristol KSW6B with ECW lowbridge bodywork, makes a splash as it passes through the ford at Sutton, Bedfordshire. John May/Online Transport Archive (SB-207-011)**



## YouTube

In the last newsletter, we mentioned the recent creation of an OTA YouTube channel. Quite a lot of material has now been uploaded and we are very grateful to Dave Spencer for the work he has put into developing our YouTube presence. For those who haven't seen what's available, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@OnlineTransportArchive> and browse the selection.

*Right:* Dave Spencer fronting OTA's YouTube channel



## The Transport Library

Our relationship with The Transport Library allows enthusiasts to purchase copies of many of the images held by OTA from which the archive receives a royalty for each sale.

This is one of our income streams providing a vitally important contribution to the cost of our ongoing conservation work, digitisation programme and storage. Part collections which are available include: Sandy McBlain, Dennis Gill, F N T (Freddie) Lloyd-Jones, Derek Norman, Harry Luff, Jim Joyce, J B C (John) McCann, John Meredith, R C (Dick) Riley and others.

*Left:* The OTA entry page on The Transport Library website.

To check full availability, go to: [www.thetransportlibrary.co.uk/-/galleries/online-transport-archive](http://www.thetransportlibrary.co.uk/-/galleries/online-transport-archive)

## Profile: Bob Bridger (1946-2018)



Robert William Bridger was born in Dartford with the family moving to the Petts Wood area before finally settling in Ashted around 1958. He worked at Bankside Power Station for a few years before joining the railway, spending time in the ticket office at Ashted, the Travel Office at East Croydon and at BR International at Victoria.

He travelled extensively behind steam in Britain until abandonment in 1968, and then started to go further afield to France, Germany and beyond. As a member of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, he joined a party to South Africa in 1971. He chose to stay in the country for a year or so, getting a job in a power station to fund his travels all over the country behind steam. In 1975 he was asked to join the LCGB's Overseas Tours Committee to organise and lead tours to various

The last days of steam at Bournemouth depot. 34082 615 Squadron is visible on the left. Bob Bridger/Online Transport Archive (0087-022)



countries in Europe, South Africa and the USA amongst others.

He left his BR job at Victoria to set up his own travel business, Rover Tours, and for a good number of years was organising trips for Americans to sample the delights of the UK and other countries in Europe. Bob was also one those who recognised, quite early on, that many collections of ciné film were gathering dust, so organised film shows and later the issuing of DVDs. He also created and ran an early online website.

Bob was a prolific photographer and film-maker, particularly on his overseas trips, and his coverage extended to modes of transport other than railways. OTA is grateful that he made provision in his will for acquired slide collections to pass to the Archive, these including

those of Charles Firminger (himself profiled in Newsletter 14), Martin Wilkins, and the Harrison family (Bernard, Roger and Alfred). Subsequently, through Bob's friend Dick Franklin (who has helped with information for this profile), the majority of Bob's slides have been passed over.

Bob died in 2018 at the age of 71 from an asbestos-related illness. He had married an American lady, Florence, only six years earlier.

South Eastern Railway (India) HSM Class 2-8-0 locomotives 26266 and 26184 at Khurda Road Junction depot in 1978  
Bob Bridger/Online Transport Archive (0413-267)



Below: Continental steam: Portuguese Railways 4-6-0 238 in the north of the country in 1970, and ÖBB 0-8-0 92.2291 crossing a viaduct on the Waldviertalbahn in Austria in 1984. Bob Bridger/Online Transport Archive (0031-007; 0437-084)



## Profile: John L May (1934-2022)



sector, firstly BOAC and later British Airways. His role was the unglamorous yet essential task of organising in-flight catering. One of his responsibilities was ensuring that crew members had different meals from each other so that in the unlikely event of food poisoning, both pilots would not be incapacitated.

He had a wide-ranging interest in transport. His early life in Somerset gave him a particular passion for

John, who died on 7 April 2022 at the age of 88, built up comprehensive colour photographic coverage of bus fleets across Britain from the early 1960s onwards. Originally from Weston-super-Mare, he lived in Ashford, Middlesex for much of his life. His career was spent in the aviation

vehicles of the Bristol Omnibus Company and this fleet is well-represented in his collection. This later extended to all vehicles produced by Bristol Commercial Vehicles and he certainly gave prominence to the marque over other vehicle manufacturers as he travelled round



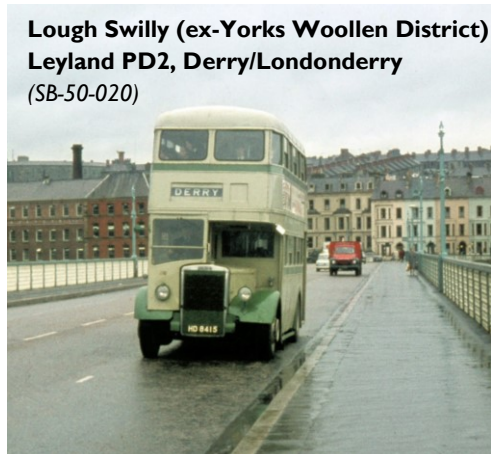
the country. In its early days, he was also the treasurer for the Great Western Society.

John's images have appeared in a number of publications, including Kevin McCormack's *Bus Stations in Britain* (Capital Transport, 2021)

All images on this page: **John May/Online Transport Archive**



Eastern Scottish Alexander-bodied AEC Reliance leaving St Andrew's Square bus station, Edinburgh (LB-01-025)



Lough Swilly (ex-Yorks Woollen District) Leyland PD2, Derry/Londonderry (SB-50-020)



East Kent AEC Reliances, Victoria Coach Station (LB-01-051)

## Wills and legacies

Managing a growing archive like OTA does not come cheap. Receiving a collection, whether during someone's lifetime or through a will after their death, is only the start. We have to consider the collection, safe storage, conservation, preservation and digitisation of the material, which is no mean feat given the vast quantity of negatives, slides, prints and digital images – as well as many hundreds of hours of ciné film – in our possession now, and anticipated in the future. Although some digitisation can be undertaken by volunteers, specialised work, particularly that relating to the ciné collection, must be done by skilled experts. Though we have been able to secure advantageous rates, it is still a cost to OTA. Some families contribute towards these costs with Gift Aid donations but much of the work has to be funded from royalties received from authors and publishers. Also, it is often forgotten how much it costs to uplift a collection and transport it safely for cataloguing and filing.

A legacy in your will ensures that funding for OTA's work is ongoing, enabling the Archive to have a secure, long-term future. It also enables OTA to house the growing number of collections in recommended archival conditions within a suitable building. It also helps towards providing public access so our collections can be

viewed, as well as encouraging volunteers to help us in our core work of filing, cataloguing, scanning and transportation.

Legacy gifts to a charity like OTA are free of Inheritance Tax. Also if you leave more than 10% to OTA you can reduce the amount of tax you pay on your remaining taxable estate. If you wish to include OTA in your will, you can create or update your will with any practising solicitor, which is more fool-proof than using one of the DIY packs available from stationers, although the latter are better than nothing. [From its experiences over the years, OTA could almost write the definitive book 'When wills go wrong!']

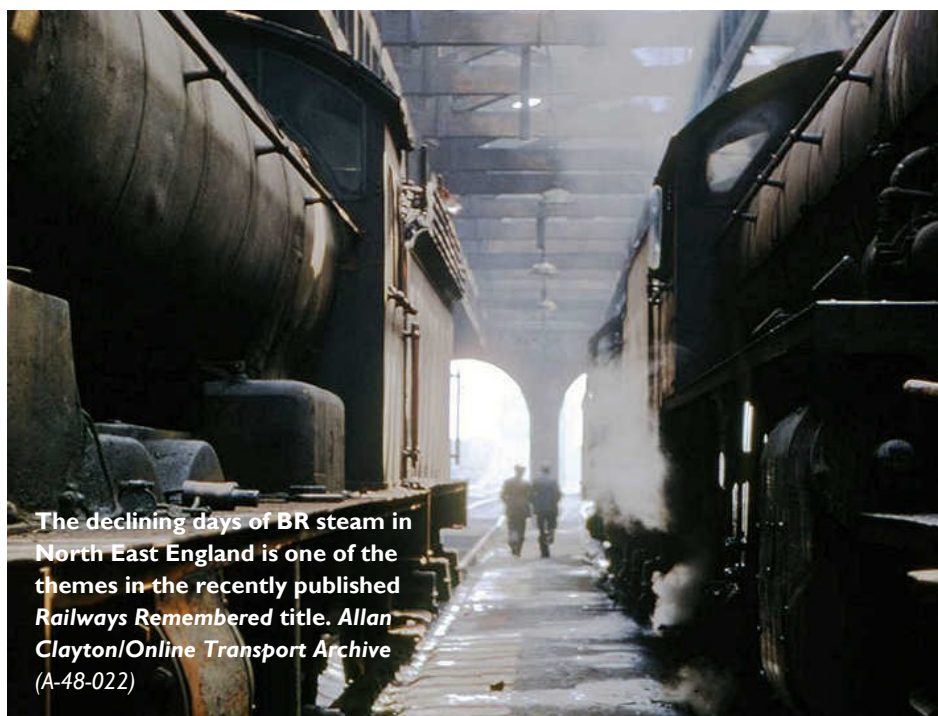
If you need to revise or update your existing will, we suggest you contact your solicitor to ensure the changes you make are legally binding. Whether for a new or revised will, the information on the panel below is essential. Please email the secretary if you have any specific questions about how this affects you.

**Name:** Online Transport Archive

**Address:** 25 Monkmoor Road,  
Shrewsbury SY2 5AG

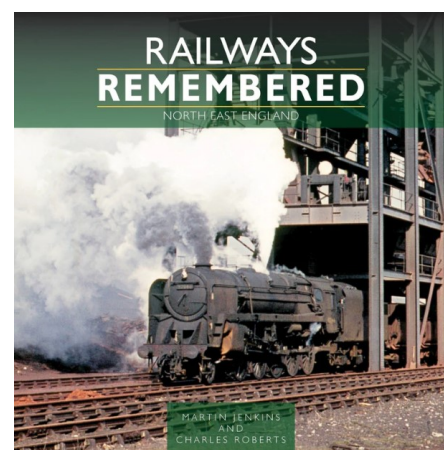
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**Company number:** 4017910

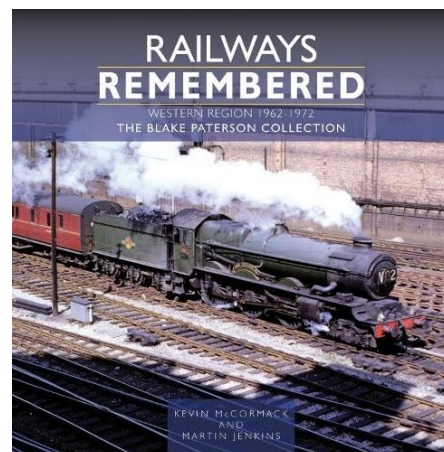


The declining days of BR steam in North East England is one of the themes in the recently published *Railways Remembered* title. Allan Clayton/Online Transport Archive (A-48-022)

## New books



With Christmas nearly upon us, we have a couple of new volumes to recommend. *Railways Remembered: North East England* (Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts, pub Crécy) is now available through bookshops and online. Shortly available from the same publishers is *Railways Remembered: the Western Region 1962-1972* by Kevin McCormack and Martin Jenkins, featuring photographs by Blake Paterson. Both books are fundraising volumes for OTA. Buying copies will generate income for the Archive, as well as increase the likelihood of further commissions in the future.



OTA would like to take this opportunity to wish all its followers a Happy Christmas and New Year.

