



Welcome to the latest edition of the Online Transport Archive Newsletter, keeping our supporters up to date with activities. In this issue, we look at the difficult task of trying to keep slides free from deterioration, hopefully providing valuable advice for your own collections. We also profile a couple of further photographers whose collections reside with OTA and review other developments.

## Slide cleaning and conservation

*This piece has been written by OTA Director Philip Hanson. In his professional life, Philip worked as a photographer and we are grateful for the benefit of his wealth of experience. This is an edited version of a fuller article which can be viewed on the website.*

Film and slides, both colour and black and white passed to the Archive can be a mix of Dufaycolour and conventional subtractive colour slides, which have suffered from the ravages of time and poor storage conditions. Many exhibit dirt, grease marks, finger prints and in the worst cases show fungal growth within the emulsion. This fungus can become an integral part of the image and therefore cannot be removed by mechanical methods, such as cleaning with liquid soap and water. Such methods can only exacerbate the damage already been caused to the image and is a method which is not recommended by any

professional organisation involved in the preservation of film images.

There is **no safe method of cleaning film by hand** particularly those damaged by fungus or other physical damage (shown right). Nevertheless those concerned with the conservation of film archives recommend, when there is no alternative, the use of soft camel hair brushes to remove dust and loose dirt from the slide which should always be handled with clean cotton gloves. It is important that if fungus is present that precautions are taken to prevent it being spread to other uninfected slides. Regular cleaning of brushes and gloves is recommended. Once fungal damage has occurred it can only be controlled by proper storage but never eliminated.



When, as a consequence of poor handling, cleaning is needed to remove grease and finger prints, isopropyl alcohol, **used sparingly on a clean cotton bud**, has been identified by major film manufacturers, such as Kodak, as the safest mechanical method to clean the backing of the film when there are fingerprints or greasy/oily deposits. In exceptional circumstances the emulsion side of the film can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol provided that it has not been allowed to absorb moisture which could be left behind in the emulsion once the alcohol has evaporated. Films should be handled with clean cotton gloves and good quality cotton buds used, which should be changed for each slide cleaning task. The safest method to preserve colour slide images is to have them scanned as high resolution files, such as JPEGs or TIFFs. It is usually possible at the scanning stage to electronically remove accumulated dust and dirt on the surfaces of the slide. (Image left shows partially restored image, awaiting further Photoshop work.)

Slides damaged by fungus, should be stored separately and away from undamaged slides, in darkness and away from ultra violet light. All slides should be stored in containers which should be acid free and chemically inactive. Ideal conditions for archive storage require humidity below 35% with cool constant temperature conditions. Wide temperature variations should be avoided to prevent moisture condensing on the surface of the slide. Achieving this is near impossible in a domestic situation so the best solution is a room within the house, where wide temperature variations and high humidity are unlikely.

A loft or garage with the risk of high humidity or wide variations in temperature should be avoided.

## Profile: Stewart Gibson (1963-1991)

Stewart's interest in trains started at an early age with a Hornby train set. As he progressed through school and college, his interest grew and he started train spotting armed with his camera and a tape recorder. Most weekends were spent at some station or depot and when he got home, he would spend hours indexing and sorting.

At different stages of his life, Stewart lived in Kirkcudbright, Paisley, Huddersfield, Chesterfield and London and so had the opportunity to take photographs at a wide range of locations. He worked mostly in the transport industry, having stints at Rolls Royce, Len Wright, and Scancoaches in London which specialised in executive coach travel. Stewart suffered from kidney failure and lost the battle on 9 August 1991 after which his extensive collection of diesel-era photographs was carefully stored until passed to OTA in 2013.

This collection very much concentrates on the 'modern' rail era and exemplifies OTA's aim to develop an Archive which spans the years and the generations.



## Profile: James Joyce (1927-2013)

It has been particularly gratifying to read the many tributes that have been paid to Jim Joyce who died on 30 June 2013. Always a private, self-effacing man, Jim would have been astonished to know how highly he was regarded within the transport fraternity. Living all his life in Raynes Park, he was eventually employed in the steel industry after gaining an Honours degree at the University of London.

Interested in all forms of transport, he was a prolific author writing many transport classics. He began taking photographs shortly after the end of the war. Then, after acquiring a good quality 9.5mm ciné camera, between 1951 and 1956 he recorded the rapidly changing transport scene in Britain during which time he took many rare sequences including Notts & Derby trolleybuses, railways around Midhurst, veteran paddle steamers and buses and Gateshead trams *in colour*. He also took footage in Belgium and Holland. However, film was expensive so sometimes the sequences, always immaculately shot, are tantalisingly brief but his extensive coverage of London trams during 1951/1952 is superb. Later, he changed to an 8mm ciné camera and eventually he began to take colour slides in the 1970s and finally colour prints.

In the late 1980s, he gave permission for his films to be used in various fund-raising tapes produced by Online Video. Some ten years ago, he passed his entire transport collection to OTA for long-term safe-keeping, making suitable arrangements in his will. Recently, his irreplaceable 9.5mm films have been digitally transferred and sequences can soon be viewed on the website.



## OTA personnel

At the last trustees' meeting in December, long standing member John Bishop decided to stand down. John – who many of you will know from his authorship of books on buses in the Sussex area and as Meetings Secretary of the East Sussex Omnibus Society – has been activity involved with OTA since its inception in 2001. He remains an OTA member.

Sadly, we lost one of our members during 2013 with the death of Alan Atkinson at the age of 65. Alan hailed originally from Cumbria but had spent his adult life in Liverpool and then the West Midlands. In his retirement from the teaching profession, he headed the team of Travelling Ticket Inspectors on the Severn Valley Railway and had written the well-reviewed book *Millom: a Cumberland iron town and its railways* in the year before his death. His ethos of active interest and involvement in all modes of transport matched that of OTA completely. OTA sends its condolences to Alan's wife Jean and to those who knew him.

OTA members around the country play an important role in spreading the word about our activities and encouraging people to think about safeguarding their collections for the future. They have also played an important role in sorting and cataloguing many of the collections which are now administered by OTA. Although many collections are indexed and cross-referenced by their originator, others reach OTA with very little organisation and it is an important and painstaking, although ultimately rewarding, job to go through them. **If you think you could help OTA in this way, please contact the secretary as soon as possible (details below).**

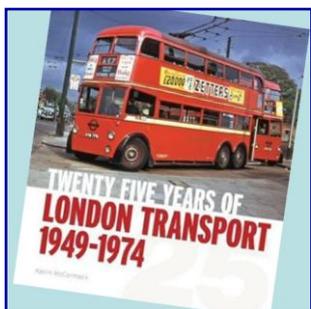
## Other activities

Behind the scenes, OTA continues its work of conserving collections. Collections recently added include those of Derek Bailey, Brian Edwards, Roger Ellis, Stewart Gibson (profiled overleaf), Malcolm Knight, John L May, Alan Ralphs, Geoff Rose, Alan Watkins and John Wood (also known as Ray), as well as further additions to the Jim Jordan, Phil Tatt and F W York collections.

Images continue to appear in books and magazines and OTA is currently working with a number of authors who are finalising their works. A recent Ian Allan publication is *Twenty five years of London Transport, 1949-1974* by OTA director

Kevin McCormack, which features over 50 images from various OTA collections. A significant amount of OTA material will also appear in the forthcoming title *Merseyside Transport Remembered*, co-authored by OTA Directors Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts. This book includes colour coverage of the rail, tram, bus, ferry and shipping scene around Merseyside from the late 1940s until the 1970s.

Martin and Charles have also recently given a number of society talks using OTA material. Martin's have included British trams in colour, interurbans of the USA and slides of Scottish transport whilst Charles has given the second in a series of presentations reviewing the late R L (Reg) Wilson's extensive coverage of Crosville.



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