

# OTA

ONLINE  
TRANSPORT  
ARCHIVE

Welcome to another edition of the OTA Newsletter. Since the previous issue, the Archive has remained active with all strands of its activities: taking collections into the Archive and ensuring that appropriate future provision is made for others; sorting, cataloguing and (where necessary) restoring images in the Archive; and bringing Archive images to the sight of the public through books, magazines, TV programmes and talks to societies. In this newsletter, we review some of these activities and also take the opportunity of profiling another collection and its originator.

**Newsletter**  
Issue 3, August 2013

## 9.5mm film collection

Prior to the introduction of amateur film formats, such as Standard 8 and Super 8, 9.5mm film was used by many amateurs and semi-professionals as a cheaper alternative to the superior 16mm format. Cameras and film projection equipment were also cheaper so it was the natural choice for those who wanted to make good quality films at a lower cost. Eventually the amateur market came to be dominated by the 8mm formats and 9.5mm film use was very much sidelined, despite its superiority. For this reason sourcing good quality 9.5mm equipment today is difficult and, when found, expensive. This makes viewing the extensive collection of 9.5mm film in the Archive a problem. Furthermore in the 9.5mm film system, both cameras and projectors employ centre sprockets for the transport of the film through the gate by the claw mechanism so that when projected even slight damage to the film, dimensional changes due to poor storage, or inexperience by a projectionist can cause irreparable damage as the claw mechanism tears its way through priceless images.



Most of the Archive's really irreplaceable 9.5 was shot during the late 1940s and early 1950s although some dates back to before WW2 and some into the late 1950s. This makes the footage extremely rare and valuable for the transport historian. For these reasons, OTA took the decision to digitise as much of the collection as possible to a high resolution format. This facilitates the assessment of these images for future exploitation and dissemination by those interested in this unique record. Although the costs are expensive, the films can now be viewed without risk to the original material. When sufficient capital is available further digital transfers will be made of other vulnerable film stock including 8 and 16mm.

## Julian Thompson Collection

Every collection which comes to OTA has a story behind it and it is important that these memories are retained alongside the collection itself. However, the recent accession of this collection is truly remarkable. Julian was a well respected tramway photographer, modeller and author of books such as the long out-of-print *Trolleybuses and Trams of the 1950s*. Latterly, he lived in the Philippines which made communication difficult, although the trustees were aware of his intention to bequeath his collection to OTA. When news reached us that he had died earlier this year, OTA contacted his widow who explained how much was involved. Several options were considered, including a courier service which would have been expensive with no guarantee regarding the quality of the material itself.



However, we were put in touch with a friend of his widow who said that she was visiting Mrs Thompson in mid-2013 and she agreed to look at the material on our behalf. Imagine our surprise when she rang to say she had returned with two large suitcases which had come back with her as hold baggage. With some trepidation, the suitcases were opened to reveal slides, negatives and, very much to our surprise, 15-20 model trams in varying states of construction. These delightful replicas have suffered some slight damage over the years and in transit, but are in the process of being carefully restored. Although not core material for OTA, we have decided to retain the models and have entered into negotiation with a suitable organisation which may hopefully be able to display them to best effect. Although the slides and negatives have suffered through storage in a tropical climate, recovery is underway. This is a time-consuming but vital part of OTAs work. As we go to press, another suitcase has just arrived from the Philippines! It has been found to include negatives, rare Dufay colour images and several manuscripts for unpublished books, which are now being assessed and sorted.

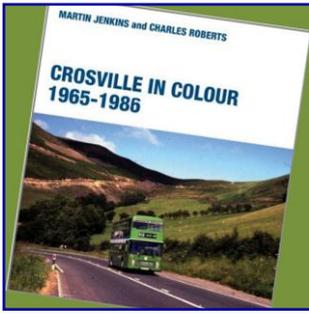
OTA owes a debt of gratitude to Gerald Druce, a life-long friend of Julian Thompson, who helped to establish contact with his widow and we are delighted that Dr Druce has now passed his own valuable collection to OTA.

### Contacting OTA

**Secretarial address:**  
25 Monkmoor Road  
SHREWSBURY. SY2 5AG

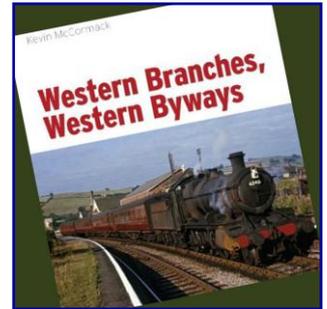
**Email:**  
secretary@  
onlinetransportarchive.org

## Crosville in Colour 1965-1986



This Ian Allan publication, co-authored by OTA Directors Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts, was released in March. It represents a change of format by Ian Allan who have moved to a larger, square layout, which allows for some of the outstanding images to be printed in a larger size. Reviews have been good. Writing in *Buses*, John Young describes the book as having some “real gems” and “... for any Crosville enthusiasts, this book will be a must.” Giving it a four-star review in *Bus and Coach Preservation*, John Lidstone praises it for the way it “... so nicely evokes a personal familiarity with the much-

missed Crosville ... a very enjoyable journey through three decades.”



Also recently published by Ian Allan has been *Western Branches, Western Byways*, by OTA Director Kevin McCormack. This includes considerable material from the Archive, including images from the R W A Jones Collection which was profiled in the last newsletter. Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts are currently working on *Merseyside Transport in the 1950s and 1960s*. Due for publication in 2014, this again draws heavily on OTA images.

## Collections and storage

Other collections recently added to the Archive include those of Alan Murray-Rust, Geoff Pullin, John Forrester, John Worley, Gerald Druce, Ted Oakley (films), Brian Faragher (Dutch slides), G W Morant (tram, trolleybus and rail slides and prints), Peter N Williams, Tony Wickens, Leo Sullivan, Frank Oldfield and Dermot Priestley. In several cases, the photographer has elected to pass over a collection over during their own lifetime so as to take advantage of OTA's storage site in Hersham. Recently, more space has been made available to us as a consequence of Ian Allan's decisions to close their printing section. OTA has security of tenure for the foreseeable future. Soon, further additional shelving and secure cabinets will be needed.



### Profile: B J “Curly” Cross

Ever since its inception, Curly Cross has been a steadfast and generous supporter of Online Transport Archive and, some three years ago, opted to donate to the Archive his extensive worldwide collection of transport-related prints and commercial postcards.

Barry John Cross was born in Croydon in June 1930. His varied education (interrupted by the war) included spells at Selhurst Grammar School (where he spent most of the classes in an air raid shelter), City of London School and University College of Hull (1948-1952). During National Service with the Royal Navy, Curly spent time on the aircraft carrier *HMS Triumph* and then on various Russian language courses. His entire professional career (1954-1986) was spent with the London County Council (later the Inner London Education Authority) where he eventually became Deputy Divisional Education Officer, first for Islington and later Southwark.

Fortunately, Curly's father was a great transport enthusiast and he has vivid memories of being taken for rides on local trams and buses, many with outside staircases such as the NS and Tilling ST. His own favourite London tram route was the 42 with its single track and loops. Curly clearly remembers being taken by his father to the Crystal Palace on an open top tram in 1935 and, later the same year, on his first trolleybus ride. Other adventures include his first trip through the Kingsway Subway, a day visit to every London main railway line terminus and a ride on an ancient ex-LUT bogie car on ex-South Metropolitan track. Outside London, his father took him (as a babe in arms) on an Isle of Thanet tram, on the colourful and beautifully maintained Brighton trams and, during a holiday in 1935, on the trams in Llandudno.

With a love of transport clearly flowing in his veins, Curly subsequently covered many UK tram, trolleybus and bus systems. His passion for overseas tramways began as early as 1947 during a trip to northern France and the Low Countries. Over the years, his travels have taken him to many parts of the world.

Having taken his first transport photograph shortly after the end of the Second World War, Curly eventually progressed to colour slides and colour negatives. However, it is his vast collection of prints and commercials assembled over many years and often obtained from his wide circle of transport friends and contacts that are an invaluable source of reference. This collection is one of the most significant to have so far been passed to the Archive. In recent months, it has all been relocated in acid-free boxes and is held in secure cabinets.

In retirement, Curly retains his enthusiasm for transport and actively supports current and future OTA initiatives.

