

# OTA

ONLINE  
TRANSPORT  
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## Newsletter

Issue 5  
December 2014

## Philip Hanson (1941-2014)

Just as this newsletter was about to go to press, we received the sad news that Director and Trustee Philip Hanson died on 6 December 2014. Philip had been an active supporter of OTA and its aims, being a regular participant in working parties at Hersham. Even during his illness, he continued to make contributions to OTA, providing valuable advice on scanning, slide cleaning and restoration. A fuller appreciation will appear in a future newsletter. Our condolences go out to Colette, other members of Philip's close family, and his extensive network of friends and colleagues.



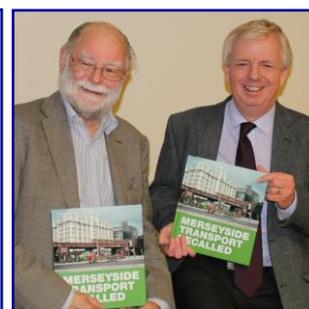
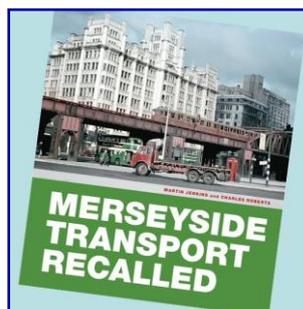
## News

This, the fifth OTA Newsletter, hopefully reaches you in time for Christmas. All of us involved with OTA would like to take this opportunity of wishing you Season's Greetings, and a healthy and prosperous 2015. In this edition, we cover a number of publications – recently published, or about to be – profile another major contributor, look at the subject of image scanning and issue a 'call to arms' for more helpers.

Late news concerns OTA's storage accommodation. Since 2006, the majority of our collections have been located within the Ian Allan Publishing premises at Hersham in Surrey. This site has now been sold. The OTA Board has known about this possibility for several months and has been exploring various alternative sites which will give OTA a major opportunity to progress and develop in a new location. Negotiations are progressing and we plan to issue our next newsletter in the spring with full details about what is happening.

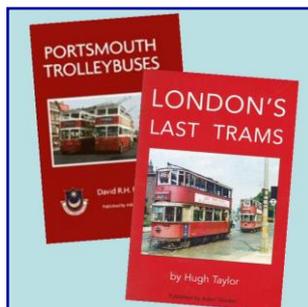
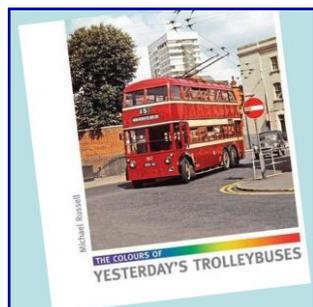
## Publications

Co-authored by OTA directors, Martin Jenkins and Charles Roberts, *Merseyside Transport Recalled*, was published by Ian Allan in October. Lavishly illustrated, it features a remarkable wealth of previously unpublished colour views, the earliest dating from 1926. The bulk, however, are drawn from various OTA collections and date from 1950 to the early 1970s. Subjects covered include the legendary Liverpool Overhead Railway, trams, buses, liners, trains, canals, docks, the Widnes-Runcorn Transporter Bridge, local buildings and industry, aircraft, ferries – and even a hovercraft and a horse-drawn dustcart. The book also records the dramatic changes the City of Liverpool and the greater Merseyside area have undergone over the last sixty years.



Most importantly, the authors' fees and many of the contributors' royalty payments having been waived in favour of OTA so this book is very much a fund-raiser for the Archive. When the launch took place in Liverpool on 20 October, every available copy was snapped up by those attending an illustrated talk given by one of the authors. In order to get the most advantageous deal for OTA, it was agreed with the publisher that full payments would not be made until the book breaks even, so strenuous efforts are being made by everyone at OTA to promote the book at every available opportunity. Surely you know someone who would like to receive one as a Christmas gift!

OTA images have appeared in a number of recent publications including books on Portsmouth and Pontypridd Trolleybuses by David Bowler and *London's Last Trams* by Hugh Taylor. Over 100 OTA images will feature in *The Colours of Yesterday's Trolleybuses* by OTA director Michael Russell which is to be published by Capital Transport in December 2014. Two further publications by OTA director – and prolific author – Kevin McCormack also feature a significant number of OTA images. These are *London Local Trains in the 1950s and 1960s* and *Colours of London Buses – 1970s*, both coming from Pen and Sword Publishing, a relative newcomer to the transport book scene.



Please spread the word about all these publications. This will help to make ever more people aware of the Archive as well as encouraging further use of our images in other publications the royalties from which will go towards ensuring OTA's long-term security.



## Profile: Harry Luff

Harry Luff was one of the first people to assign ownership and copyright in his extensive collection to OTA. Born and educated in south London, Harry worked most of his life for London Transport latterly as a driver on the underground. He was a prolific and skilled photographer taking his first black and white views in the late 1940s. Guided by his friends Jack Wyse and Frank Hunt, he graduated to colour slides and cine film in the mid-1950s. He was a selective photographer often confining himself to a single image of a vehicle or location. He was also very well travelled. For example, he made his first trip to North America in the mid-1950s when he rode and photographed the last of the classic US interurbans. During these overseas visits he made many friends some of whom stayed with Harry when they visited the UK. He took particular pleasure in being able to show them 'behind the scenes' especially on the underground. He was one of the earliest bus preservationists and it is believed that the Gilford he bought with Ken Blacker and Prince Marshall in the 1950s was only the second privately preserved bus. A quiet often unassuming man, Harry was highly knowledgeable and scores of enthusiasts will remember him coming to various transport events usually accompanied by his dog. Harry passed away in 2008. We know he would be very proud that his films and slides are now being enjoyed by a new generation of enthusiasts.



## Image scanning

It is estimated that OTA now has in excess of 500,000 slides, negatives and prints. On arrival at OTA, some collections are immaculately catalogued whilst others require considerable input. In a previous edition of the newsletter, we reported on the Julian Thompson collection, repatriated from the Philippines in poor condition and in urgent need of conservation and scanning. That vital work is now underway and some restored images have already appeared in print whilst others will appear in some of the books described above. There are a number of key

questions concerning scanning – to what specification should the images be scanned, who will undertake the work, which collections should be prioritised?

OTA generally scans to the following specification for all negatives and prints: a minimum resolution of 350dpi with an output size of A4 or equivalent. In terms of 35mm transparencies, we always aim for TIF format at 1000% enlargement with 350dpi as opposed to 100% at 3500dpi; although the file size may be the same, the former results in better reproduction. This specification ensures that images can be provided directly to publishers who may then undertake some PhotoShooting to remove imperfections and adjust colours when necessary. It also means the master copy can be used to provide lower resolution copies for authors, researchers and for use in PowerPoint presentations etc. If you are considering scanning your own image collection, please approach OTA first so you adopt the same standards.

*Who will undertake the work?* A number of people are now helping with this rewarding work. For example, OTA member, Geoff Smith has already worked his way through thousands of images and is now tackling the Julian Thompson colour slides. **Do you think you could help with scanning?** If so - you would sign for a batch of images to be scanned within a given timescale, which could easily be fitted into a few hours a week around other activities. Volunteers have all reported how interesting and rewarding it is to see hitherto unknown images appearing on the screen, and they are doing OTA an immense favour at the same time. **If you would be interested in helping, please contact the secretary as soon as possible – email address below.**

*Which collections should be prioritised?* This is a difficult decision, but a start has to be made somewhere. The first priority has to be those at most risk of further, possibly terminal, deterioration such as the Julian Thompson collection. Next come those showing clear signs of emulsion crazing or growing spider's webs. Some have been selected for their rarity value or because there is no supporting documentation. Once scanned, it is then possible to compile reasonably detailed notes of image subject matter thereby building up a database of information which, in time, can be made searchable. [A future newsletter will address the subject of consistent file naming, and a database format which OTA can recommend to people scanning their own collections to ensure compatibility.].

## Contacting OTA

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