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ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT  
IN MANCHESTER



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# MANCHESTER CORPORATION TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.



## A HUNDRED YEARS OF ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT IN MANCHESTER.

**I**T is difficult to realise in this mechanical age that only four generations ago the only public passenger services from town to town throughout England were by stage coach and canal. Transport of passengers from one district to another within the boundary of a town was provided for only by the hackney coach and the cost of even this limited facility was practically prohibitive. As an example, for those who were able and willing to pay, a two-horse coach could be hired in St. Ann's Square at a fare of five shillings for a journey to Cheetham Hill, but, in addition to this, toll bars cost eightpence and the driver expected sixpence for a drink. Needless to say, the two-horse vehicles from the town were not often seen in the neighbouring villages.

Going back to 1750, it appears that when the people wished to ride, local transport in Manchester was still by the favourite sedan chair. There was an attempt in that year to establish hackney coaches, but the inhabitants did not encourage the effort, the reason apparently being that the extremities of the town were comparatively near together and were within easy walking distance. The population of Manchester in that year was a mere 30,000 persons.

Tracing the development of the carriage from earlier times, the conveyance of passengers by wheeled vehicles has not always been given official approval nor has it always received popular support. Under the feudal system there was for a long period a prohibition upon the use of carriages which were supposed to render those who used them less fit for military service. Generally speaking, down to Tudor times journeys had to be taken on foot, on horseback, or by boat.

When carriages were first introduced, about 1580, the gentlemen of the period looked upon them with contempt, considering them only fit for women and the sick. It was then held a disgrace for a young gentleman to be seen riding in the streets in a coach.

The early coaches were gorgeously embellished with wonderful carvings, but although beautiful to look at were without springs of any kind and despite the superior attitude of the male sex of those days it was an ordeal to take a ride in one. Pepys in his diary describes in 1665 "the trial of some experiments about making of coaches easy. And several we tried; but one did prove mighty easy (not here for me to describe, but the whole body of the coach lies upon one long spring)."

Travel by coach developed fairly rapidly after adoption by Royalty and the nobility, and by 1625 hackney coaches had made their appearance in London. These first hackney coaches were imitations of the private coaches or were the discarded coaches of the rich.

The public vehicles were not regarded favourably by Charles I., who endeavoured to encourage the use of sedan chairs, but without success. The King thereupon issued a proclamation forbidding anyone to engage a hackney carriage unless for the purpose of going at least three miles out of town.

Pepys evidently looked somewhat askance at the hackney coach for he says: "I have a mind to buy enough ground to build a coach-house and stable; for I have had it much in my thoughts lately that it is not too much for me now in degree or cost to keep a coach, but, contrarily, that I am almost ashamed to be seen in a hackney."

The use of coaches for public passenger services from town to town did not apparently take place until some time after their general adoption in London, owing to the state of the roads. By 1658, however, there were regular services of stage coaches throughout the country.

The earliest stage coaches were the last word in heaviness and clumsiness, so that the pace was slow, three or four miles an hour being the normal rate of progress.

By 1754 some attempts were being made to improve matters and it was announced in Manchester that "However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually arrive in London in four days and a half after leaving Manchester."

This acceleration was proudly acknowledged and advertised by being called the "Flying Coach."

Mail coaches did not come into existence until 1784.



*Stage Coach Propelled by Steam—Year 1821*

*A forerunner of the mechanically-propelled omnibus was built in 1821 and actually ran between London and Birmingham. It carried 28 passengers on the inside and 22 outside. The further development of steam transit of this kind was effectively curbed by absurd statutes, one of which required that a man carrying a red flag should precede the vehicle, thus limiting the speed to four miles per hour.*

The neighbouring townships were linked up with Manchester by the hostelries. The Bull's Head, Chorley Road, Swinton, may be quoted as an example. It was the first stop from Manchester for the Lancaster coach.

Mrs. Linnæus Banks in "The Manchester Man" vividly portrays the bustle and excitement when the London coach started from Market Street Lane at five o'clock every morning:—

"The open space in front of the Palace Inn on the north side of Market Street Lane was enlivened by the newly-painted London stage coach, the 'Lord Nelson,' the fresh scarlet coats of coachmen and guards, the assembling of passengers and luggage, the shouting and swearing of half-awake ostlers and porters, the grumbling of the first-comers (shivering in the raw air) at the unpunctuality of the stage, the excuses of the booking-clerk, the self-gratulations of the last arrival that he was 'in time,' the dragging of trunks and portmanteaus on to the

top, the thrusting of bags and boxes into the boot, the harnessing of snorting steeds, the horsing of the vehicle, the scrambling of the 'outsiders' to the top by the ladder and wheel, the self-satisfied settlement of the 'insides' in the places they had 'booked for,' the crushing and thrusting of friends with last messages and parting words, the crack of the whip, the sound of the bugle, the prancing of horses, the rattle of wheels, and the dashing off up Market Street Lane of the gallant four-in-hand, amid the hurrahs of excited spectators."

A similar scene took place many times a day, for the Manchester Directories record that regular services were maintained by mail coach and post coach to places as far afield as London, Aberdeen, York, Bristol, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hull, etc. The many Inns of Market Street provided convenient starting points for the majority of the services. The chief coaching house for half a century was the Bridgewater Arms. In 1827 the venue was changed to the Royal Hotel at the corner of Market Street and Mosley Street. Other services commenced from Deansgate, Hanging Ditch, Shudehill, Withy Grove, and St. Ann Street.

The business of providing transport was not without its worries, even in the good old days. The "Gentlemen's Magazine" reported that on the 29th March, 1788, "a most daring murder and robbery was committed near Miles Platting on the person of Mr. Worthington, the York Carrier, who had scarcely left the house where he had stayed to drink than he was shot dead and his watch and chain taken from him."

The risks of road transport of those times are also referred to by Swindells in "Manchester Streets and Manchester Men." Speaking of the journey from Manchester to Cheetham Hill he says: "Highway robberies were somewhat common in the twenties, but it was not until a Mr. Ruddock was shot that the inhabitants made a move towards making travelling along the highway more safe. A private watch was established, the watch consisting of two watchmen of ancient type. Each of these carried a lantern and a heavy stick and small watch boxes were placed, one at the Stocks and one at Halliwell Lane."

#### THE OMNIBUS

An outline has been given of the evolution of the passenger coach from the early carriage to the hackney coach for local purposes and subsequently to the stage coach and mail and post coach. It was not until a little over a hundred years ago that passenger services for local transport were created and the omnibus emerged as the vehicle for the purpose. The history of local passenger transport in Manchester can be divided into three periods. In the first, lasting about 50 years, from 1824 to 1877, omnibuses

commenced to run on a modest scale and the services eventually reached all districts, thanks to the initiative of individual operators. Towards the end of this era the majority of the services were merged into one company.

The second period, again of 50 years, 1877-1927, saw the eclipse of the omnibus by the advent of the vehicle running on a fixed rail—the tramcar—which was first propelled by horse and later by electricity. The third period is the one commencing a few years ago, when the tramcar itself began to lose its monopoly by the coming of the motor omnibus.

Until the latter half of the eighteenth century Manchester was but an ordinary country town with access to the sea by the River Irwell and the River Mersey. An immense impetus was given to the industrial development of the town by the application of steam to manufactures which necessitated the concentration of machinery in large factories. In the 15 years from 1788 to 1803 the cotton trade trebled itself.

The movement of the population towards the towns was rapidly developing and there was an extraordinary rise in the total numbers of the people. The population of Manchester and Salford in 1801 had reached a total of 115,941 and twenty years later, when there were over 100 spinning factories in the district, the population was nearly doubled. Despite this rapid increase the outskirts of the housing area had barely reached to Cheetham, Newtown, Beswick, Ardwick, Chorlton Row, Hulme, Old Trafford, and Pendleton.

Districts as remote as Swinton or Cheetham Hill were quiet rural villages with narrow country lanes and a little handful of villagers whose work and interests centred almost entirely around their own hamlet. Very little traffic passed along the highway—an occasional farmer's cart or the mail coach and a few other coaches were the only vehicles to be seen.

The days when the city merchants resided in Lever Street and when Mosley Street was the "West End" of Manchester were, however, now passing. The development of industry was creating a middle class which began to reside nearer the green fields of Green-Heys and Pendleton.

The first man to notice this movement and to realise the possibilities of catering for the transport needs was a certain John Greenwood, who, just over a century ago, commenced to run a service of omnibuses between Pendleton and Manchester.

The credit for the initiative and business acumen—so typical of the Northerner—is entirely due to Greenwood as a pioneer of transport, and he greatly benefited by his enterprise. He happened to be a toll-gate collector, and it was when he was in charge of the great toll-gates at Eccles Old Road and Bolton Road, Pendleton, that he saw there was a demand for local daily services.



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MANCHESTER CORPORATION  
TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

Axon in his "Annals of Manchester" gives the date of the opening of the service as the 1st January, 1824. It should be noted that omnibuses did not run in London until more than five years later, when George Shillibeer commenced to run buses between Paddington and the Bank. The London omnibuses had an extra attraction, as Shillibeer provided books and newspapers for the passengers. Paris, by the way, had omnibuses as early as the year 1662.

The vehicle that Greenwood used was worked by one horse and made the journey from Pendleton to Market Street and back a few times a day—morning, noon, and evening. Swindells records in "Manchester Streets and Manchester Men," that "St. Thomas's Church, Pendleton, had not then been built, and where the church tower now stands was the famous 'Pendleton Pow' standing on the village green. Some persons doubted the wisdom of Greenwood's venture and the vehicle which ran to Market Street was locally called 'th' pow mail.'"

The experiment proved successful and very shortly afterwards a more commodious conveyance was required, so two or three vehicles described as "square little boxes on wheels" were put upon the road. These at first were styled "The Bees." The French had a good slang term for these conveyances, viz.: "Four Banal," meaning parish oven! They held eight or nine persons inside and were provided with a seat in front which accommodated three or four in addition to the driver.

The duties of the driver were somewhat arduous. Besides his two horses he had to manage a horn with which to announce his progress. He had to descend from his box when a passenger wished to get out, open the door, collect the fares, and account for them at the office.

Greenwood had, in addition to the toll-bar business, taken a yard and stables behind the Horse Shoe Inn. At the entrance to the yard he built a small office where his sons John and Henry received from the drivers the amounts alleged to have been received for fares. This was not altogether a satisfactory transaction to both sides, as there was not any elaborate ticket system in those primitive days, and Mr. Greenwood, who was somewhat of a character, humorously suggested that his man "might allow him one wheel in four, considering that he had to find all the expenses." It was a favourite saying of his that he first taught the Manchester people to ride, or, in other words, to lose the use of their legs! The early omnibuses in Manchester were not started in the interest of the general public but to accommodate merchants and others. The fare of sixpence for the single journey was in itself sufficiently dear to restrict the service to the wealthy patrons. The fare was, however, relatively cheap in comparison with the hackney coaches and this helped to increase

the popularity of the omnibus. At the same time it should be realised that the great mass of the people were then extremely poor. The hand loom weavers were fighting a losing battle against the machine and the industrial revolution had not improved the general welfare; the Peterloo riots had occurred only a few years previously. There was, moreover, very little movement of the people in general to warrant any widespread support for services.

In addition to Pendleton the merchant began to colonise such districts as Ardwick, Broughton, and Oxford Road, where the style of the older houses still recalls him. Following his initial success, Greenwood opened up other routes. In conjunction with a Mr. Turner he began a service of omnibuses between Cheetham Hill and Market Street, the fare being the same as on the Pendleton route.

There was never any fear of any of the drivers being designated a Jehu for the pace of the early buses was very slow. The cause then was the motive power and not traffic congestion, the modern problem of the roads. The times nevertheless were picturesque and one passenger recalled a Cheetham Hill gentleman sometimes asking the omnibus driver if he would have his nightcap! Silence hours and Ministry of Transport regulations were then unknown for every driver had a horn to blow to give notice of his coming, but if there was a guard he usually had a French horn or a keyed bugle and he played tunes up and down Market Street. But what was then considered a musical treat has long since been put down by the authorities as a nuisance.

About this time another enterprise was undertaken by a Christopher Batty between Greenheys and the Manchester Exchange, running several times a day at the usual fare of 6d.

One passenger recalled a smart favourite driver named George on "Batty's Bus," as it was known. He was a popular character with a flower in his buttonhole as long as flowers could be got.

The Greenheys bus originally started from Tuer Street and later from the bottom of Lloyd Street and Gore Street to Greenheys Lane, then up Burlington Street to Oxford Road and on to the Exchange. This circuitous route was for the convenience of regular passengers who resided in Gore Street. If the morning was wet, strangers would endeavour to get into the bus and call out lustily on George to stop. They seldom succeeded for he would neither hear nor see them until his regular daily passengers were safely housed inside. In later years, as a result of competition from a Scots rival, Batty had to reduce his fares to fourpence and threepence. This sadly grieved George's respectability and he vowed

he would give it up for omnibus driving was becoming "low." Still he kept his place until the fares were threepence and twopence. This was a degradation to which he would not submit, so he became a cab driver!

By 1832 the following services are recorded in the Manchester Directory:—

*" Omnibuses "*

" Coaches to Ardwick, Broughton, Cheetham Hill, Eccles, Green-Heys, Pendleton, Rusholme, etc., several times the day—and to Cross Lane, Eccles, Patricroft, etc., by the Rail-way carriages seven times a day."

It will be observed that some districts were now linked up by the railway, for the line to Liverpool was opened in 1830.

In 1832 the Stage Coach Act was passed which allowed passengers to be taken up or set down at any point *en route*. This facility considerably increased the convenience of the omnibus and made it a more popular vehicle in consequence.

In 1835 was started an omnibus service between the "Robin Hood" in Church Street, Manchester, and the "Golden Lion," Harpurhey. The advertisement was in the following words:—

*" Manchester to Harpurhey Omnibus "*

" Wm. White, hackney coach proprietor, most respectfully announces to his friends and the public that he has added to his establishment of coaches a new eight-inside omnibus, which he intends to commence running on Monday, March 30th, 1835, from the 'Robin Hood,' Church Street, Manchester, to the 'Golden Lion,' Harpurhey, and which he hopes will give entire satisfaction."

The fare was sixpence each person.

The outlying towns of Stockport, Ashton, etc., were linked up with Manchester by coaches, for Everett, in his panorama of Manchester published in 1834, says "In addition to the hackney coaches and the numerous short stage coaches which ply several times a day between Manchester and the towns adjacent, there are now at regular hours every day accommodation coaches or omnibuses carrying passengers at the rate of about 2d. per mile from the lower end of Market Street to Pendleton, Cheetham Hill and Didsbury, and from Oldham Street and Mason Street there are accommodation coaches on the same terms to Newton Heath and Harpurhey."

The effect of the buses on the distribution of the population was felt after a few years' time, for it is further stated "In consequence of these increased accommodations, persons are constantly removing for the sake

of health and retirement to the outskirts of the town and the surrounding villages, leaving those parts which were once occupied as dwelling-houses to be converted into warehouses or offices for business. Let the present fashion of emigration from the centre of the town go onwards a few years longer and all that was once called "Mancunium" will claim the appellation of a town of warehouses"—a statement that reads like a prophecy.

The process has continued to the present day. The growth of the city and the expansion of local passenger transport are interdependent factors and the truth of this is emphasised to-day by the opening up of housing estates such as Wythenshawe, which are encouraged and facilitated by the modern motor omnibuses.

An early example of co-ordination between two forms of passenger transport is shown in the establishment of a line of conveyances running for the convenience of passengers journeying to Liverpool by the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, which was opened in 1830. Swindells records that the Railway Station, at that time, was situated at the bottom of Liverpool Road, the booking office being in Market Street at the corner of New Cannon Street. These omnibuses were provided and worked by the well-known stage coach proprietor, Henry Charles Lacy, of the Royal Hotel. Each coach was painted a dark green colour and inscribed in large gilt letters, "Auxilium No. 1," etc. Four buses ran in all. The route was along Bridge Street where, in the expectation of a constant traffic in that direction, a large hotel was built. Passengers were booked in a similar way to the stage coach system. Swindells states "the name of the passenger, the amount paid, and the destination were entered in a book, a counterfoil duly signed by the person booking the passenger being given to the traveller. Armed with this slip of paper, the passenger was allowed to enter the station, but the slips were collected by the guard before the train started. A way-bill giving a list of the passengers was carried by the guard of the train. The slips were only available for the particular train for which the passenger was booked and if by any mischance the passenger was not able to perform the journey, he received back half the fare if the slip was returned not later than the following day. First-class passengers were carried free, but second-class passengers were charged sixpence."

"In 1844 the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was extended to Hunt's Bank and the buses ceased to run to Liverpool Road."

About the year 1838 an occasional omnibus was run in the Cheetham Hill district by a man named Penketh, who afterwards sold it to John Ramsbottom and continued to drive for him. Ramsbottom was a coach proprietor who resided at Temple Cottage. He increased the number

of vehicles and later they were sold to Greenwood, Clough, and Turner, who ran them until the partnership was dissolved, when Robert Turner retained the Cheetham Hill business, Greenwood resuming possession of the Pendleton branch.

#### TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND TOWN PLANNING

The expansion of road transport in Manchester a century ago had a great influence upon the planning of the central area of the City. By 1831 the population of Manchester and Salford had reached 279,398, having increased in ten years by nearly 50 per cent. As the traffic of the town became more general, congestion was reported to be acute, particularly on market days. Cross Street at the time was just emerging from a labyrinth of lanes. Market Street, which at one point was only wide enough to allow one vehicle to pass at a time, was widened at considerable cost and, later, Corporation Street was constructed, but, although the work on this street was commenced in 1845, it was not completed until ten years later. Prior to the formation of Corporation Street there was no direct communication between Market Street and the newly-created residential district beyond Ducie Bridge.

#### TRANSPORT BY WATER

It is interesting to note that in 1830 Manchester was linked by daily services by passage boat with Warrington, Runcorn, Lymm, Leigh, Worsley, Wigan, etc.

The fares on the Lymm route were as follows:—

|                    |         | <i>Passage Boat</i> |                  |
|--------------------|---------|---------------------|------------------|
|                    |         | <i>Front Room</i>   | <i>Back Room</i> |
| Stretford .. .. .  | 6d.     | ....                | 4d.              |
| Altrincham .. .. . | 9d.     | ....                | 6d.              |
| Dunham .. .. .     | 1s. 0d. | ....                | 8d.              |
| Lymm .. .. .       | 1s. 6d. | ....                | 1s. 0d.          |

An interesting comparison can be made of the cost at the opening of the railway era of passage from Manchester to London for a family consisting of two adults and three children; by canal boat £3 14s., by railway £4 15s., and by coach £6 2s.

The details are as follows:—

| <i>By Canal Boat—Manchester to London.</i>            | £     | s. | d. |
|---|-------|----|----|
| Two adults' passage, 14s. each .. .. .                | 1     | 8  | 0  |
| Three children's passage, 7s. each .. .. .            | 1     | 1  | 0  |
| Provisions, etc., for five days' passage, 5s. each .. | 1     | 5  | 0  |
|   | <hr/> |    |    |
|   | £3    | 14 | 0  |

*By Railway—Manchester to London—212 miles.*

Third Class, Manchester to Birmingham :

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Two adults' passage, 11s. each .. .. .         | 1 2 0  |
| Three children's passage, 5s. 6d. each .. .. . | 0 16 6 |

Third Class, Birmingham to London :

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Two adults' passage, 14s. each .. .. .     | 1 8 0 |
| Three children's passage, 7s. each .. .. . | 1 1 0 |
| Food, etc., 1s. 6d. each .. .. .           | 0 7 6 |

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£4 15 0

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*By Coach—Manchester to London—186 miles.*

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Two adults' passage, 30s. each .. .. .      | 3 0 0  |
| Three children's passage, 15s. each .. .. . | 2 5 0  |
| Coachman and guard .. .. .                  | 0 7 0  |
| Food, etc. .. .. .                          | 0 10 0 |

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£6 2 0

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#### EARLY COMPETITION

By the year 1847 it was evident that the use of the hackney carriage had become general as Parliament passed the Town Police Clauses Act, which included elaborate provisions for the licensing of these vehicles and their drivers.

These provisions were only operative where incorporated with a Special Act and in substance they empowered the local authority to license "such number of hackney coaches or carriages of any kind or description adapted to the carriage of persons" as the authority might think fit.

It is recorded that in 1850 there were 64 omnibuses running in Manchester, for which 387 horses were required.

The year 1852 marked an important change in the omnibus services in Manchester. In that year an entirely new style of vehicle was introduced by a Mr. McEwen. It was much longer than those in use, was without a door, was double deck, and was drawn by three horses abreast. The seats on top were arranged down the centre and the passengers sat back to back facing outwards. This type of bus was thus named "knifeboard." The vehicle had accommodation for 17 passengers inside and 25 outside. McEwen astonished everybody by immediately reducing the fares from 6d. to 3d.—an epoch-making event. Here was a rival indeed, and a movement was started which created as great a revolution as that by Rowland Hill with the penny post.



*Manchester Three-horse Omnibus, 1856*

The proprietor's capital was insufficient for his enterprise, for by this time the number of vehicles in daily use had considerably increased as one by one new routes had been adopted and additional districts catered for.

In a short time McEwen disposed of his entire property to a Mr. Alderman Mackie, who made considerable additions to the plant, started several new routes, and largely stimulated the traffic.

Mr. John Greenwood, the originator of the Manchester omnibuses, died in 1851. At the time of his death he had become one of the largest omnibus and coaching proprietors in England, for in addition to the local services he developed, he instituted daily bus services from Manchester to Chester, to Buxton, and to Sheffield amongst others.

Greenwood's son, also named John, succeeded to the business. In 1862, the year of the Exhibition, it is recorded that Mr. Greenwood, Junr., built a number of new omnibuses, took them up to London and entered spiritedly into competition with the owners of the buses in the Metropolis for a share of the traffic. It is said that the great superiority of the Manchester buses much excited the jealousy of the local firms.

The coaching business began to fall off owing to the extension of the railways, which were now capturing the town to town road traffic. From



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Manchester, in the direction of Chester, the railway was developed to Altrincham, and Mr. Greenwood found it necessary to curtail his long distance omnibus journeys. Until the railway was extended he ran in conjunction with it from its terminus to Chester—another instance of co-operation of road and rail transport.

#### THE MANCHESTER CARRIAGE COMPANY

By the year 1865 omnibuses were being run on a fairly extensive scale in Manchester by a number of independent operators and an important step was taken in that year in unifying control by the formation of the Manchester Carriage Company. Mr. Greenwood had for some years been a partner in the business of Robert Turner & Co., operating on the Cheetham Hill and Broughton routes, and this firm was included in the new Company, together with the City Omnibus Company, formed by Alderman Mackie and others.

Alderman Mackie was the first Chairman of the new Company and Mr. John Greenwood, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director. The offices of the Company were for many years near the bottom of Market Street, the shop taken in Mr. Greenwood's days of ownership.

One of the few omnibus owners who did not amalgamate with the Manchester Carriage Company was a Mr. Standring, who ran buses to Brooks's Bar.

The Company gradually enlarged its operations until a service of three-horse buses ran along most of the main roads. The minimum fares charged were 3d. inside and 2d. outside, for there were no stages.



*Market Street-Pendleton Service—Manchester Carriage Company*

In the days of the horse bus it was the custom every week-end to take holiday-makers out to the then rural districts of Sale, Northenden, and Stretford, where they would all—guard and driver included—make merry at a local inn.

A favourite was the Old Cock Inn at Stretford, which stood in the midst of green fields and woods.

One of the duties of guards was to attract the attention of prospective passengers by shouting invitations and "Come on, Northenden," "This way to the circus, Sale," "Nice day for a ride sir," were familiar cries.

Reference has been made earlier in these notes to the difficulties that arose even in the first few years of the omnibus regarding the check on the employee in connection with the collection of fares.

For many years it was the practice as the passenger entered the vehicle to make a mark on a waybill, which was exhibited in the bus. No other check was placed upon the men, with the exception of occasional supervisors, until the introduction of a metal "collection box" for the fares. The innovation caused trouble.

A strike occurred among the men on the Rochdale Road route because exception was taken to notices which appeared in the vehicles offering a reward of £10 to anyone who could bring a conviction against a conductor for taking the passenger's fare in his hand instead of the passenger putting the money into the "collection box" which the guard carried about with him. The passenger was expected to drop the fare through the slot of the box and the coin could then be seen through a small glass panel. The conductor then pressed a button and the money disappeared into the lower section of the box.

The men refused to work under conditions of open suspicion and the strike was successful and resulted in the offending notices being removed.

The system of booking passengers by means of consecutively numbered tickets was invented about 1839 by Thomas Edmondson, of Lancaster, but the idea was not adopted for the local services in Manchester until the Manchester Corporation commenced to operate in 1901.

Fletcher Moss in his "History of Cheadle" (published 1894) describes the early days of the Cheadle omnibus in the following words:—

"When the stage coach business was at its best, in the earlier half of the 19th century, most of the coaches going south to Manchester passed through Cheadle, as the roads were better and less hilly than those by Buxton.

Manchester to Wilmslow was a 12-miles stage. When the railway was opened these coaches were not used, and Cheadle was left isolated until some enterprising individual started one to run to Manchester and back, the fare being half-a-crown either way.

Perhaps 40 years since (1854) another was started, having more the character of an omnibus and the fare was reduced to a shilling. More buses were run and the fares were continually being reduced until everybody connected with them was ruined.

In 1875 I negotiated the sale of the Cheadle Omnibus Company to the Manchester Carriage Company for £800 goodwill, and the stock at valuation.

In 1876 the coaching mania was rather prevalent about London and extended even to the neighbourhood of Cheadle, for I bought a coach and 'ran it' from the 'White Hart,' Cheadle, at 8-30 every morning, arriving at the 'Spread Eagle' Hotel, Manchester, at 9-15 and leaving at 5-0 p.m., arriving at the 'White Hart' at 5-45 p.m. This journey of seven-and-a-half miles was punctually performed in the 45 minutes during the four summers of 1876-7-8-9, and very pleasant was the company."



*Two-horse Omnibus—Manchester Carriage Company*

## THE COMING OF THE TRAMCAR

The second phase in the history of local passenger transport in Manchester was about to be entered upon with the appearance of the tramcar. Although tram lines were not laid in Manchester until 1877, a system of tramways had been proposed to the Salford Town Council as early as 1861, and in August of that year an agreement was sanctioned for the laying down on "Haworth's Patent Perambulating Principle" of an iron tramway for the passage of omnibuses, to be moved by horse-power, from Cross Lane over Windsor Bridge along the Crescent and Chapel Street to Albert Bridge. The scheme, however, was not proceeded with.

The first horse tramcar system to be constructed in this country was by George Francis Train, at Birkenhead, in 1860. Mr. Train declared the advantages of the tramcar to be (in his own words)—"saving of time—no jolting—less confusion—less noise—fewer accidents—no mud—less dust—more regularity—more attention—more comfort—better light—better ventilation—greater facility of ingress and egress, in short, superiority in every respect over the old omnibus. Saving of rates and increased value of property, mark the introduction. Ladies welcome it—children enjoy it; it is the rich man's comfort—the working man's luxury. When London adopts it all classes will prize it, and wonder (as in the case of steam and gas) how they could have existed so long without it."

Amongst the gentlemen who spoke at the banquet which was held to celebrate the occasion of the opening of Birkenhead's Tramway System was Mr. Fox of the "Manchester Guardian," who complained that the Birkenhead cars were deficient in ventilation. Manchester, he said, had the best horse omnibuses in the world and he was doubtful whether tramways would supersede them. Mr. Train said they had certainly the best omnibuses in Manchester—"But mine is not an omnibus it is a railway car, and with regard to ventilation you have only to open the windows and every man can ventilate himself."

Mr. Rumney, a member of the Manchester Corporation, in responding to the toast, stated that no prejudices on the part of the people of Manchester would stand in the way of Mr. Train's project being considered in that City. He said he believed that the Manchester Corporation was as free from prejudice as any Corporation could be.

The general adoption of horse trams was retarded for a number of years because the street rails were fitted with projection flanges. These were found to be not only inconvenient but dangerous to other vehicles, so much so that a line of tramways laid in London was declared to be a nuisance and the authorities peremptorily ordered it to be taken up again.

An attempt was made in 1872 by Mr. H. O. O'Hagan to work up a scheme for tramways in Manchester, but it failed.

The commencement of tramways in one town met with an agitation to "scrap the trams," for in 1867 the following poster appeared :—

" THE GREAT TRAMWAY NUISANCE."

" FELLOW SUFFERERS,

we have long been subject to this dangerous and crying evil. Some good men and true have at last taken the matter up, and if we support them as we ought,

THE ODIOUS TRAMWAY MUST COME UP.

Attend the Meeting on Wednesday evening next, at half-past seven and show that you are determined that our principal Highway shall no longer be encroached upon ; that life and limb shall not be endangered ; that the public traffic shall not be obstructed ; and that the livelihood of many a poor man shall not be taken away for the purpose of filling the pockets of a clique of greedy and monopolising speculators.

A POOR CABBY."

In 1877 a tram line was laid from the Grove Inn, Bury New Road, to Deansgate, and on to Pendleton, and a horse car service instituted. This service was operated by a Yorkshire company, Messrs. Busby and Turton, of Leeds, and afterwards it was purchased by the Manchester Carriage Company.

In 1880 the Carriage Company decided to introduce horse-cars on all routes and the work was completed in about two years' time. The Corporation laid the lines within the City boundary and the Company the lines outside. The title of the Company now became " The Manchester Carriage and Tramways Company Limited."

The minimum fare on the horse-cars was at first 3d. inside and 2d. outside, but about 1886 a wagonette service commenced by a Mr. Musgrave soon caused a change to occur. The wagonettes, which were drawn by two horses, ran between Ardwick Green (Stockport Road corner) and the City at a fare of 1d. and the guard was usually a young woman. In view of this low fare, wagonettes naturally proved successful and similar services were instituted in other parts of the City by various people. The popular name for the vehicles was " penny jigger."



*Two-horse Tramcar—Manchester Carriage and Tramways Company*

Faced by this opposition the Tramways Company brought out their three-horse buses and ran them at a penny fare. Later, the tram fares were reduced to a minimum of 2d. inside and 1d. outside, and eventually about 1888 penny fares for both inside and outside were introduced. When the fares reached one penny the public preferred the horse trams and so the buses were gradually withdrawn.

Another competitor was a Mr. Andrews, of Cardiff, who introduced buses with wheels to fit the tram lines. The Carriage Company, with their greater resources, arranged to have two buses running along with every one of Andrews' vehicles, and thus ran him off the road.

Tip horse lads were in charge of the extra horses which helped to pull the cars up at Mill Lane and Openshaw Brow *en route*. Their job was to attach the spare horse to the car and after the car reached the top of the gradient, to detach the horse and ride it back to the foot of the hill—a job that many school boys envied.

The Tramways Company ran the first one-horse tramcar in this City in the year 1888 and it had seating capacity for 16 passengers. The vehicle could be swung round on a pivot without unhitching the horse. On

reaching a terminus the car was reversed without the driver leaving his seat.

The same Company also operated a two-horse car, the Eades patent reversible tramcar.

The horse omnibus, although completely superseded by the horse tramcar on the main routes in Manchester, was still to be seen on those routes where the low frequency of the services did not justify the high capital cost of laying down the track. For example, Northenden (from Palatine Road), Cheadle (from the "White Lion," Withington), Southern Cemetery (from Brooks's Bar), and Middleton (from Cheetham Hill) were routes which remained dependent on the horse bus.

#### MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Probably the most important change which took place during the period under review was the taking over and the operation by the Manchester Corporation of the tramway system of the City.

It should be explained that the tramway lines in the City before the incorporation of the out-townships were owned and constructed by the Corporation and were leased to the Manchester Carriage and Tramways Co. Ltd. The lines in the adjoining districts outside the City were owned and constructed by the Tramways Company and the whole system which extended to Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, Hyde, Stockport, Stretford, and Salford was worked by the Company by horse traction. The leases of the Corporation lines expired at various dates between 1898 and 1901 and the Corporation, after considerable discussion, adopted a resolution in 1895 to take over the tramways and operate them as an electric system. Agreements were reached with the neighbouring authorities and they gave notice to the Company to take over their respective sections of tramway. A single arbitration was agreed upon and after prolonged negotiations, including hearings before the Courts, an agreement was reached with the Company under which the lines were to be handed over to the Corporation, reconstructed and equipped for electric traction by the Corporation, and taken over route by route, and gradually the new system came into operation.

The first electric tramway, that of the Cheetham Hill and Hightown route, was opened on the 7th June, 1901, and the complete conversion of the horse system to electric traction was effected by April, 1903, the last section opened being that between Old Trafford and Barton Road. The entire system at that date owned and leased by the Corporation extended to 138 miles of single track and comprised the tramways of 12 districts, in addition to the City lines, Salford having decided to operate their tramways as a separate system.



Manchester Corporation Transport Department.

## Shilling "Cheap Travel" Ticket

You can obtain the 1/- "CHEAP TRAVEL" Ticket from any of the Conductors.

It is available on the day of issue from 10-0 a.m. to Midnight on Weekdays, all day on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

**TRAMS on which YOU MAY TRAVEL:—**

Any tram in Manchester and the area bounded by the following places:—

Great Ducie Street, Waterloo Road (on 10 and 54 services only).  
Cheetham Hill Road (Heaton Park).  
Oldham Road (Hollinwood Terminus).

Ashton New Road (Snipe Inn).  
Ashton Old Road (Snipe Inn).  
Hyde Road (Broomstair Bridge, or Bull's Head, Reddish).  
Stockport Road (Lloyd Road).  
Haughton Green.

On the 34 route it is available between Belle Vue and St. Mary's Gate only, and on the 36 route between Levenshulme and the Cathedral only.

Along Deansgate on 10, 30, 31, and 54 Services.

It is not available in Salford, Rochdale, Oldham, Ashton, Joint Board area, or Stockport.

**BUSES on which YOU MAY TRAVEL:—**

New Moston, Culeheth, and Stevenson Square.  
Bradford Road and Stevenson Square.  
Guide Bridge and Piccadilly or Central Station.  
West Didsbury and Parris Wood.  
West Didsbury, Wythenshawe, and Brooklands.  
West Didsbury and Droylsden.  
Clayton Bridge & Levenshulme.  
Lostock Estate and Stretford.  
Styal, Moss Nook, Northenden.  
Between Northenden (Church Inn) and Piccadilly.  
Sale and Piccadilly (Service No. 49. On 47 and 48 Services, School Road and Manchester only).  
Parker Street and Trafford Park.

Mills Hill Bridge and Manchester (via Cheetham Hill Road).  
Cheetham Hill and Blackley.  
Cheetham Hill & Brookdale Park.  
Cheetham Hill Road and Stretford Road.  
Middleton, Middleton Junction, and Stevenson Square.  
Wythenshawe (Benchill or Baguley Estates) and Barlow Moor Road and Manchester.  
Lawton Moor Estate and Barlow Moor Road.  
All Rochdale Road Services to Rochdale boundary.  
Deansgate and Trafford Park (in the Park only).  
Heywood and Cannon Street (via Rochdale Road).

**THE TICKET IS NOT AVAILABLE ON BUS ROUTES NOT SPECIFIED ABOVE.**

Children under 14 years of age may obtain a similar Ticket at Half the above Fare, viz.: 6d. **NOT TRANSFERABLE.**

**A Ticket must only be used by the person to whom it is issued.**

Ask at any Tram Office for the Folder, "Where to Go."

**FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE TAKE A SHILLING TICKET.**

## MOTOR OMNIBUSES

The horse omnibus still survived, but its fate, however, was soon to be sealed, for in 1906 motor buses were introduced on the Northenden and Cheadle routes. The horse omnibus eventually disappeared, to return temporarily to the Northenden route at the outbreak of the Great War when six motor buses were impressed by the Government.

The early motor buses were a somewhat doubtful proposition from the point of view of reliability and were anything but quiet and smooth running. The buses were double deck, with solid tyres, of course, and, with the water-bound type of road surface of the times, they caused a cloud of dust to be raised as they rolled along. These pioneer days, nevertheless, served a useful purpose in enabling improvements to be made, and by 1910 motor buses were emerging from their "teething" troubles.

During the years immediately following the War the motor buses were regarded as invaluable auxiliaries to the Tramways System, but there was no suggestion that they would supplant it.

In 1923 the number of motor buses in stock was only 16, but as connecting routes began to be opened, which served as "feeders" to the tramways and to link up the outside districts, the numbers steadily increased until three years later the fleet had reached a total of 51 vehicles. To meet the need for the extra accommodation required, Parrs Wood Garage was opened in March, 1926. Connecting routes were opened between Cheetham Hill and Blackley, via Higher Crumpsall; Cheetham Hill and Rochdale Road, via Lower Crumpsall; Rochdale Road and Brookdale Park, via Newton Heath; and Chorlton and Urmston, via Stretford. West Didsbury and Brooklands were also connected up via Wythenshawe.

## EXPRESS BUS SERVICES

As late as April, 1927, very few motor buses were seen in the centre of the City, for they were considered to be vehicles only suitable for operation in the suburban districts where the loading was light.

The establishment of express bus services, the first of which was the Cheadle and Heywood route, marked the inauguration of a new era in motor bus operation.

It was felt at the time that there was a growing demand for services which would provide a more expeditious journey than that of the tramcar. The rail vehicle has by law to observe certain stops and is subject to so many obstructions in the course of its journey that the speed factor is very definitely limited. The purpose of the express buses was to provide

limited stop services for those willing to pay more than the ordinary tramway fares for the advantages of greater comfort and expedition.

With the object of reducing the congestion it was agreed that no termini should be established in the centre of the City and that all the routes should be through routes crossing the City, with intersecting points to provide for interchange of traffic between various routes.

Operating agreements were made with several neighbouring transport authorities, both municipal and company, for interchange of traffic. In this way multiplicity of services or objectionable break in the journey was avoided and districts beyond the City boundary were linked up by speedy motor bus services.

The scheme that was launched was on a comprehensive scale and districts as remote as Altrincham and Rochdale, Bolton and Hyde, Heywood and Gatley, etc., were connected up. It was announced at the time that the experiment was probably the first in the world—certainly the first in Great Britain—of operating motor buses parallel with and supplementary to the tramway services, each type of vehicle functioning to the best of its ability.

The express services were immediately popular and within a year nineteen routes were being operated. There is probably no area in Great Britain outside London where the population of one town or district is contiguous to so many other towns as is the case in the Manchester area, and it was natural that there should be a ready response to through transport facilities being provided.

There was some difficulty at the commencement in arranging fares on a common basis on the various operating authorities' systems—children's fares, charges for luggage, dogs, parcels, etc.—but all these points were considered and as far as possible one policy adopted throughout the route. As a result of this experience one important feature has emerged, that is, the necessity for a common policy to be adopted by all the transport authorities in a given area.

#### ABANDONMENT OF TRAMWAYS

A fundamental change in the mode of conveyance of passenger transport in Manchester was proposed in 1929, when the first tramway route was recommended to be abandoned and motor buses substituted, on the Circular Route No. 53.

It was not surprising that a proposal of such a bold nature should have its critics. The experiment was awaited with the greater interest because it was felt that the future policy would be largely influenced by the operating results. It was a particularly severe test of any type of transport, for the route lies along narrow tortuous thoroughfares in densely populated areas where the traffic is heavy and the operating conditions extremely difficult.

The result of the conversion fully confirmed the wisdom of the change, 1,355,843 additional passengers per annum being carried, an increase of six per cent. In order to accommodate these extra passengers 349,773 extra miles were run, with a more frequent service of double-deck buses, and the revenue increased by £18,360. The speed of the buses is eleven miles per hour, compared with nine miles per hour by the trams.

This success led to the abandonment of the Sale and Altrincham and the Bradford Road tramway routes and their replacement by buses. Other routes were converted—Knott Mill, No. 50; Middleton Road, Nos. 59 and 77; Guide Bridge, No. 30; and the Rochdale Road group of routes—and in every case of conversion there was an increase in revenue and the number of passengers carried. The total increase in revenue on these routes amounted to £68,339 per annum. Altogether a total length of 38 miles of permanent way measured as single track has been abandoned.

Although there were several reasons for this conversion from tramway to motor bus operation, the prime motives were to avoid the heavy cost of renewal of track and the perpetuation of a system of transport which under certain conditions is already considered obsolete. Manchester by its conversions has escaped an immediate liability of £174,486, and an ultimate amount of £401,118, which would have had to be incurred if the tracks had been renewed.

In addition to the financial aspects of the position, several converted routes suffered from the disadvantage of having single track with loops which slow down the schedule speeds, add to congestion, and are a source of considerable danger in foggy weather. The Circular Route had low bridges which prevented the use of double-deck tramcars and the cost of operation was therefore high in comparison to the seating capacity of the vehicles.

On the Altrincham route the revenue was falling heavily notwithstanding running fast and up-to-date tramcars. Following the conversion to buses the revenue has greatly increased, despite the fact that the Railway Company has spent £500,000 in electrification of the Altrincham line.

The necessity for street widenings and improvements to obtain double track operation and double-deck tramcars has been obviated by the operation of motor buses which, with their greater mobility and speed, have proved readily adaptable to urban conditions. In addition, alternative routes which were impracticable for tramcar operation were opened up by the buses and choice of termini in the City area has been rendered possible, thus reducing congestion. On certain tram routes buses acted as "feeders" to the tramway system. Following the abandonment, through running became possible and the objectionable break in the journey was obviated.

The development of the internal combustion engine, and later, the use of heavy oil for fuel, producing economy, safety and reliability in operation, together with higher standards in lighting and seating, have induced a greater riding habit and have proved the motor bus to be a successful rival to the tramcar.

#### FARES AND SERVICES

From the "few times a day" which formed the service on the early Greenwood route, it has become necessary to operate as many as from 40 to 130 journeys AN HOUR on various populous routes at the busy periods, carrying between 2,000 and 6,000 passengers. It is unlikely that this number of passengers would still be carried if the original fare of 6d. any distance were in force, but fortunately such is not the case. A fare of 6d., in fact, is uncommon for any distance at all on the ordinary routes, while with a 1s. "Cheap Travel" ticket it may actually be cheaper to ride than to wear out shoe leather.

Perhaps the most notable occasion recently on which a great demand was made on the transport services was that of the Royal Visit to Manchester on Tuesday, July 17th, 1934, when many thousands of people were assembled in town to pay respect to Their Majesties. Provision was made for 100,000 extra passengers on this day and 110 vehicles were chartered to convey private parties and school children.

The greatest number of passengers ever carried by the Department in one day was on Saturday, October 2nd, 1926, during Manchester Civic Week when 1,461,352 persons travelled by the various services.

Every effort is made by the Department to convey passengers with the greatest expedition, and a special staff is maintained in order to ensure that arrangements in this respect are satisfactory. Owing to the rapid housing development, particularly, which is taking place in nearly every suburb of the City, observations must frequently be taken on every route at all the principal stopping places, so that the transport facilities





















shall be equal to the demand. The reader may have observed inspectors recording the census of his own route, and it is on the result of such observations that adjustments to the service will be made if necessary.

With the operation of a system carrying one million passengers a day and employing over 7,000 employees there are bound to be some complaints, but it must be recognised that the Department is often blamed for circumstances for which it is not responsible.

Many bus services have been broken in the centre of the City by the instructions of the Traffic Commissioners, and the exigencies of traffic congestion often mean disorganisation which the Department cannot control. These alterations cause some public inconvenience and complaints, and it is the Department which has usually to bear the brunt of these complaints.

Delay is often caused both to trams and buses by traffic congestion. The schedule time for the Department's vehicles to traverse Deansgate is seven minutes, and Market Street five minutes. It often takes four times as long to negotiate these thoroughfares during busy periods. These blockages affect the services throughout the system and cause bunching of vehicles in the centre of the City, but everything is done by the Department to reduce the delays to a minimum.

The following diagram shows the very striking increase in the operation figures of the motor bus section of the Department:—

| YEAR ENDED<br>31st MARCH | NUMBER OF<br>BUSES  | MILES   | PASSENGERS  | RECEIPTS   | BALANCE IN<br>RESERVE FUND   |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1929                     | 127   |   | 20,212,221    | £223,825   | £37,323    |
| 1931                     | 258  |  | 56,532,889   | £501,845  | £88,774   |
| 1933                     | 353  |  | 86,261,705   | £698,216  | £160,919  |
| 1935<br>(estimated)      | 493  |  | 115,000,000  | £930,000  | £230,000  |

\* Subject to a pro rata distribution of depreciation of motorbuses and charges re converted routes.

## PARKER STREET BUS STATION

Following the development of the services and the introduction of motor buses into the heart of the City it was realised that there was need for adequate provision for a central terminus for the vehicles.

To meet the situation the Transport Department, in October, 1931, opened a portion of the motor bus station in Parker Street on land forming part of the Infirmary Old Site in Piccadilly, and the cost of the station, which was completed in January, 1935, has reached a total of £75,745 (see frontispiece).

The Bus Station serves as a focal point for services as far distant on the north side as Uppermill, via Oldham, and on the south Macclesfield, Congleton, Warrington, Salterswell, via Northwich, etc., etc. Passengers find it very convenient to be able to change in the station from one route to another in safety and security; whereas previously the loading points for the various services were scattered throughout the central area they are now centralised.

Manchester's shops serve far more than the immediately adjacent population, and one reason for the attraction of the shops is the convenience and cheapness of communication supplied by the bus services. The great popular stores are within easy reach of Piccadilly and the Bus Station, and during the afternoons and at the times of the sales the station is thronged with visitors from the outlying districts.

As many as 1,000 buses call daily at the station.

## CHANGES IN TRANSPORT

It will quite easily be realised that the changes in transport during the past few years have meant an enormous amount of reorganisation "behind the scenes."

A readiness to be adaptable to change is a necessity of a Transport Department and a review of the past hundred years illustrates the constant readjustments that have had to be made by those responsible for supplying Manchester's transport needs. The twentieth century has seen more rapid

developments than at any previous time, and the process of change still continues.

Depots have been modified for use as garages, the employees have had to be trained in the new technique of motor bus driving, a new army of garage workers has had to be engaged—every section of the Department has, in fact, been directly affected by the new conditions.

Not only is it necessary for a Transport Department to be adaptable to change, but it is equally important for it to take the long view in an intelligent anticipation of demand. Slum clearance schemes, the development of housing estates, the redistribution of the population, changes in the riding habits of the people, all require planning for the future. An ability to take advantage of improvements in technique is another necessary asset of administration, and in this respect Manchester can rightly be proud of its pioneer work in the development of the heavy oil engine bus.

Manchester has always been a pioneer in transport as in so many other matters affecting our civilisation. The Bridgewater Canal; the first omnibuses by John Greenwood; the Manchester to Liverpool Railway; the Manchester Ship Canal; Manchester's Airport, the first Municipal Airport in the Kingdom; here is a great tradition which it is our duty to maintain.

Manchester's fundamental need for a cheap and easy outlet to the sea for the purpose of its export trade, and its position as a commercial city ringed by manufacturing towns, prompted many of its external communications. Its internal lines of communication have been dictated by the daily need for its workers to travel quickly and cheaply from home to the office and factory, and its place as the Metropolis of the north with its shops, entertainments, and public activities. Something further than this should be said. Just as it is true to say that the size of a Transport Department is relative to the market it serves, so is it an axiom that a city is dependent for its growth upon its transport services, and without an efficient system of transport the community suffers. As one test of its efficiency it is therefore satisfactory to know that the fares in Manchester are among the cheapest in Great Britain, and the bus fares are probably the cheapest in the world.



The foregoing notes will, it is hoped, convey some idea of the evolution of local passenger transport in Manchester during the past century. From the view point of development it is a far cry from the sedan chair and horse-drawn omnibus to the modern motor bus, although measured in years it is little more than a century ago that omnibuses commenced to run on the streets of Manchester. Of the future it would require the imagination of H. G. Wells to be able to speak. It is at least safe to say that we have not reached finality in transport.



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