

THE OFFICIAL OPENING of

# DOVER TRANSPORT MUSEUM'S NEW HOME ————— Budge Adams

What joy to be – for a whole three hours – in the happy company of a dedicated band of enthusiastic amateurs : amateurs in their status but wholly professional in their attitude to their chosen speciality, their enthusiasm was amply demonstrated and was infectious.

Representatives from many local societies and clubs (Philomena and me from our society) were guests of the Transport Museum in the Maison Dieu and were presented to Dover's Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs W. T. Newman – to mark the civic importance of the occasion? After this pleasant touch of formality we all, the Mayor and Mayoress happily with us, embarked in a fleet of vintage vehicles which, after much photography by all sorts of people and from all sorts of angles, set off on very nearly the longest route to the new Museum in Cambridge Road. (No, the A20 contractors had no hand in the arrangements!). The cavalcade was led by an open-sided Dennis 28-seater bus, vintage 1929, and a 1959 Humber Super Snipe, a 1965 Commer Fire Engine, a 1934 Austin 10 Lichfield saloon and an antique double-decker bus completed it. What fun! People on the route smiled and laughed and were at one with us in our enjoyment of the whole affair.

At the museum the Society's President, Mr George Blackburn, using an efficient and well-modulated P.A. system, ably and succinctly drew a word picture of the organisation's birth, its aims and development and the underlying reason for today's occasion and then gave thanks to the Dover Harbour Board for making a home available for its large and most interesting collection, albeit on a (long-term.?) temporary basis. He said that as the new premises, in spite of their temporary nature, were more than reasonably adequate, the Museum had decided to apply its funds and income to the restoration, refurbishment and repair of its exhibits rather than use them on the building itself. An imposing frontage can be a great help in projecting an image but I think most people would agree that what is in the bottle is what really counts.

The Society's President thanked all the members, their wives and supporters, – and many friends – who had helped, using their varied skills and abilities, to make the Museum the success he knew it should and would be, and then, in a charmingly sincere denouement, complimented and thanked the 11-year old daughter of one of the members whose school project on the History of the Dover Transport Museum Society had so completely provided him with a ready-made speech full of facts and interesting sidelights.

Mr Blackburn then invited Councillor Newman, the Mayor, to unveil a tablet, made by Michael Harris, a member of the Transport Museum Society, which in a well-proportioned and pleasing design, commemorated the occasion.

The Mayor, in a suitably short speech in which every syllable could easily be heard, said "he was delighted to have led – he was a little unsure, he thought he led – the cavalcade of vintage vehicles. It was a wonderful, and to him, unique, experience and he was so happy to share in it. He thought the thanks of the town should be extended to the Dover Transport Museum Society for surmounting their problems" and "with committed zeal . . . with enthusiasm, with stubborn persistence and imagination . . . pursued their cause", — the establishment of the Museum in its new quarters. He also said that it was not just cars that the Museum Society's members were concerned with but they had "a belief in quality, a belief in craftsmanship, a belief in design" and "a care and love for the vehicles, a delight in vintage cars, which I think are" essential parts of "our rich and present inheritance. The spectacle . . . rallies and warms the heart. This is a great triumph, Mr President."

The Mayor then unveiled the plaque, the Museum was officially open, the guests were invited to take refreshment and there was a general invasion of the galleries. For me, the restored and restorable vehicles, the wide range of artifacts and paraphernalia of transport in a bygone age were fascinating, almost breath-taking, especially a 1930's railway ticket office, nostalgic, but so very accurate in all its detail – the unfinished mug of tea, the cards from a game of 'pontoon', the clerk's high chair with a rough tear in the leather covered seat, the whistle and the lantern. Working models of Dover trams, a whole sheaf of bus tickets, posters, time-tables, uniforms, luggage barrows, colliery 'tubs', the variety was endless. And on hand were enthusiastic members of the Museum Society ready to explain and amplify. I was a young boy in a seventh heaven! Go to see it!

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The Museum is open Wed/Thur/Fri/Sat from 2-5pm. On Sundays from 11am-5pm.  
Admission £1.50. Children, 3-16 years, £1. Senior Citizens £1.

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## BINDERS for the *NEWSLETTER*

The Society has a small stock of Binders for the *Newsletter* in the more recent A5 size. The binders were made to hold thirteen copies, but as the number of pages in our journal is now considerably more than was first envisaged, thirteen is beyond the designed capacity but they will hold at least a full three year's issues. The colour of the binders is a "warm brown" – almost mahogany and they are very durable. Gold lettering on the spine reads; "THE DOVER SOCIETY —NEWSLETTER". They are good value at £3.50 each + postage where applicable. A phone call (208008) or a note to Budge Adams at 24 Castle Avenue will reserve a binder for you.