

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LORRY DRIVER IN THE 1920'S



AROUND THIRTY-FIVE to forty years ago, a joint owner of the Pinchbeck Transport Company gave me a photo of his lorries lined up at the Flaxmill in Pinchbeck. At the time, I was also given the names of two drivers who drove the lorries and one wrote as follows:

"Lorries were Ex. W D 3 ton Thorneycroft on solid rubber tyres. Seats were wooded bench type and you had to provide your own cushion. There were no side windows and the driver's windscreen

by Tom Bray

was split into two parts, one of which could be opened for ventilation in summer and to give better visibility in fog. There were hand operated windscreen wipers fitted to some vehicles. In frost conditions to help keep ice off the screens, drivers used to cut a potato in half and rub them on the glass. Regulation lighting consisted of two oil lamps to the front and one red one to the rear. These frequently blew out but providing the front offside and rear one were on, there was no trouble with the police.

There were no Universal Joints on the transmission shaft. The joints consisted of fibre packings between flanges secured by six nuts and bolts. These often had to be renewed by the driver during a night journey with the aid of one of the oil lamps.

Some drivers acquired acetylene lamps and generators by devious means and fitted them themselves. These were a great improvement to lighting. Under the driving seat boxes of tools and spare parts were carried and drivers often had to make running repairs. Speed limits were 12mph and

police used to set them. Usual journey time from High Bridge to London Market was about 7 hours but it was possible to do it in 6 hours by slipping out of gear downhill and getting a good run at the next uphill.

These runs to London were usually made after drivers had worked locally through the day and it was necessary to leave Spalding by about 8pm to catch the early market, they would then pick up a return load and deliver to its destination.

Brakes on the vehicles consisted of a foot brake which worked on the drive shaft and a hand brake which worked on wheel drums.

For local work, trailers were sometimes drawn and total weight carried was about 10 to 11 tons. These trailers were fitted with hand brakes and if the lorry brakes would not hold, then the drivers mate had to get out and run alongside whilst holding onto the trailer brake.

Loads to London usually consisted of potatoes and green vegetables collected from the Spalding and Boston districts and return loads were of general goods."

