

INTRODUCTION

The transport studies of the period 1919 to 1939 in British history have largely concentrated upon the national scene and urban areas where the increase in the use of motor vehicles were greatest and their effects most noticeable. Little detailed work has been completed on rural areas in this period. This study goes some way to fill this gap in our knowledge. It will investigate the management of road traffic from the point of view of safety, in the rural county of Herefordshire, to ascertain principally through the medium of the committee reports of the County Surveyor and Chief Constable to what extent the county followed national trends.

To assess the extent of the new problem the County Surveyor ascertained the level of use, the type and weight of the vehicles using the county road and centred his efforts on improving the road widths and alignment together with strengthening the road surface. Analysis of this data provides a clear picture of changing road use in the county. Attention then moves to investigate the occurrence of road accidents in the county to ascertain the effectiveness of the County Council's efforts to provide a safe road network.

Initially the study examines the social changes which occurred in the inter-war years and the effect these had on the increased use of motor vehicles in the county. Pollard has provided an analysis of the changes in economic and consequent social aspirations of the public in the inter-war years in Great Britain. He notes that there was a dual reaction to events:

on the one hand there were greatly improved amenities, a widening of horizons which had been available hitherto to only a small minority. On the other hand there existed prolonged unemployment combined with social stagnation and the personal hopelessness associated with it.¹

In Herefordshire motorised road transport, both the motor car and the omnibus, was adopted with enthusiasm. The effects of the national economic problems of the inter-war years were not so pronounced in rural areas, such as Herefordshire, enabling its inhabitants to enjoy widened horizons.

The safety of this new form of motor transport has been subject of much academic attention. Taylor, whilst he acknowledges the influence of the motorcar in transforming social life comments with concern upon the public's acceptance of the number of injuries which resulted from road accidents.² O'Connell has also evaluated the effect of the motorcar on British society with reference to the influence of the motorcar on road safety. He agrees with Davis that the dangers brought by motor vehicles were underplayed by the influential national motoring lobby. The dangers, he considers, 'presented by motorisation have been legitimised. That is to say that they have been made acceptable as part of a political and ideological process.'³ Bagwell and Lyth examine the political background to the new industry of motor transport.⁴ The government was keen to support the evolution of the motor car since the industry was able to provide employment and its products could be taxed. The question of road safety in the early 1920s had not yet emerged as being a problem. A roads department separate from other forms of transport was created by the Transport Act 1919 under Sir Eric Geddes to provide the industry with encouragement and to protect public safety which resulted in the publication of two further Acts in 1930 and 1934 which regulated the use of the national road network.

O'Connell also investigates the impact of the motorcar on the countryside. The farming community made use of motor vehicles, albeit on occasion second hand, for leisure uses and also for the transport of stock and work upon the land. The attractive countryside of Herefordshire and the Three Choir Festival also began to generate additional tourist vehicles on the county road network. Jeremiah's discussion on the imaging of motoring makes reference to 'the romance of the great outdoors as illustrated in *Autocar* of 6 July 1920. The 'romance' of the countryside which offered peace and solitude with one's beloved away from the noise and bustle of urban life also increased the sale of motor cars and was encouraged by the government. A caravan could be taken on these journeys which allowed for a cheaper and more convenient holiday and increased the sale of caravans.



Figure I-1
The Romance of the
Great Outdoors⁵

The government as mentioned above, was keen to support the new industry of motor transport. The industry was very willing to respond and to increase their sales of motor cars encouraged young women to become car owners in their own rights. The Austin Motor Car Company were keen to encourage women drivers and published graphic drawings of the young modern women owners of 1930. The newly launched *Harpers Bizarre* carried one such illustration:

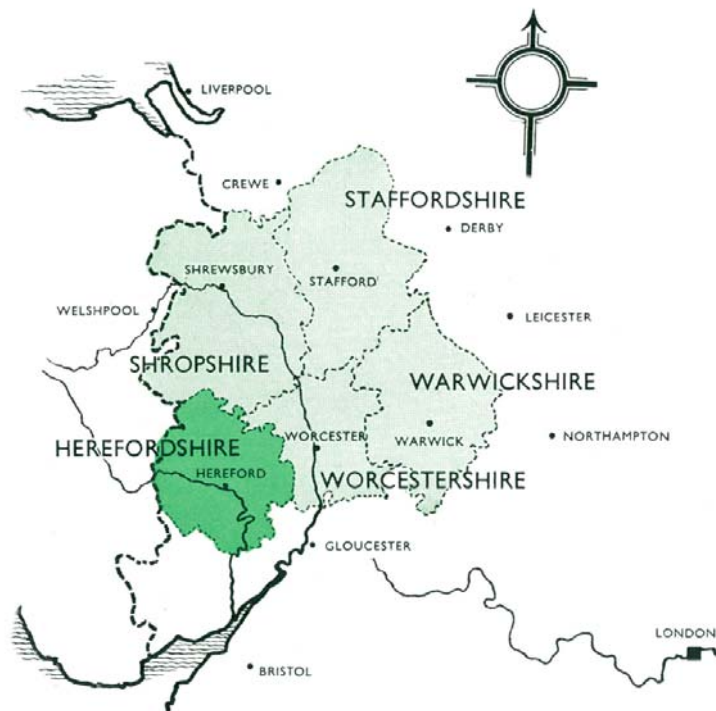


Figure I-2
The Austin Seven 'Think it out'
1930⁵

The monthly woman's journal *Good Housekeeping* promoted the use of motorcars by women⁶. An article in the October 1938 edition by Gillian Maud entitled 'A Woman needs a Car' suggests that it keeps her out of a domestic rut and adds much to life! An advertisement in this edition by Vauxhall (Appendix 1) for their new Cadet with synchro-mesh gears is a charming example of a condescending male attitude towards a women's appreciation of the mechanical marvels of a modern motor vehicle.

The first chapter critically evaluates the nature of Herefordshire in the inter-war period. Herefordshire is situated on the borders of Wales in the Welsh Marches with the more affluent counties of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire to the east. The more sparsely populated Welsh counties of Brecknock and Radnor lie to the west of the county. A planning survey undertaken in 1946 by the West Midland Group on Post-war Reconstruction and Planning provides a large amount of local statistical background.⁷ The area occupied by the West Midland Region taken from the report is shown in Figure I-3.

Figure I-3 Herefordshire and the West Midland Region in relation to England and Wales (scale 1:2,000,000)



The survey makes much use of the 1931 census. It revealed that the city of Hereford accommodated twenty per cent of the total population of the county which was 110,000. The rural area of the county which was 843 square miles supported a thinly spread population.

The county in the first half of the twentieth century had changed little in a hundred years. A local writer has gone further and described Herefordshire in the early 1920s as being enclosed within its borders and seeing little change in a thousand years.⁸ The alignment and surfacing of the county road network was suited to a time when only slow-moving horse drawn vehicles were used. A secondary source, Hopkinson, has provided evidence of the fatalities which occurred in the First World War and which directly affected their families living in the county⁹. From a population of 113,189 (1921 census) the number of those who had lost their lives as a result of the four years of conflict was 1893, some one and two thirds per cent of the total population of the county. He suggests that as a result of the scale of mismanaged slaughter at the front, their attitude may have been adversely affected towards overt authority, such as, over burdensome traffic legislation. The court records mentioned in Chapter Four do suggest a lenient attitude was taken by the magistrates in administering traffic legislation in Herefordshire in the inter-war years.

Extensive primary local records of the work of the County Surveyor and Chief Constable exist in the Hereford Record Office (HRO) to support this study.¹⁰ The quarterly and annual reports of both the County Surveyor and Chief Constable to their committees, together with court records, enable a detailed study to be made of the inter-war period. HRO also has records of the counts of traffic volumes taken at fixed points in the county network in the August of a number of years during the study period.¹¹ They enable a picture to be assembled of the increases and changes in type of the vehicular usage of the county road network and the efforts of the local police force to maintain road safety. A number of local secondary sources have also proved helpful in providing local background for the use of the motor vehicles in the county. The Herefordshire bus operators in the inter-war years is the subject of Dunabin's book *The Hereford Bus*.¹² He used principally his own records together with those of local bus companies to provide a complete list of vehicles operating

between the wars. The anecdotal memoirs of the Rev F. Coley covered his time during the inter-war years in rural Bromyard and includes many tales which refer to motor vehicles.¹³ The history of the large local employer in Hereford, Bulmers the cider maker, is the subject of a useful detailed study by Patrick Wilkinson, which includes comments upon the changing transport strategy of the company.¹⁴ They continued to use the railway network throughout the period of the study but increasingly used motor transport in the 1930s for destinations of up to 100 miles from the cider works.

Perks and Thompson note that historians have of late increasingly begun to use oral testimonies¹⁵. Thompson recalls that:

Until the present century, the focus of history was essentially political: a documentation in which lives of the ordinary people were given little attention

He continues:

Witnesses can now be called from the under-classes, the under privileged and the defeated. (Oral History) provides a more realistic and fairer reconstruction of the past.

He warns however that the historian can be criticised for his method of interviewing and his use of the possible unintentional meaning of the interviewer's words. The two gentlemen whose memories were used in this thesis could be termed to spring from the under classes and were chosen to illuminate their reaction to authority and pursuit of pleasure.

This thesis is supported by the oral evidence of two local inhabitants Geoffery Gwilt and John Challen both of whom have lived all their lives in the Bromyard area¹⁶. Gwilt, born in 1928, was the second son of a local farmer. Challen, born in 1914, left school aged twelve and by the age of sixteen was driving goods lorries in the Midlands area and as far north as Blackpool. Challen grew up in the countryside where attitudes to life changed slowly, under the shadow of the First World War. He was born and still lives in a small settlement two miles to the east of Bromyard. The use of this oral testimony must be assessed on their reliability, validity and authenticity. As to the authenticity of the evidence used in this thesis both the inhabitants gave their evidence directly to the writer and in that sense can be accounted as being authentic. However, when considering the reliability and

validity of the evidence difficulties arise. The age of the witness is clearly important. A witness over the ninety years of age recalling an event which occurred seventy years ago could be open to unreliability and an informed opinion is necessary before the information he offers is accepted. This is also true for its validity. However if the information offered is corroborated by other sources its use given the above provisos can be included

The second chapter investigates the extent of the growth of road transport in the county in the inter-war years. The HRO is well provided with relevant material for this period.¹⁷ It includes not only records of a large number of traffic counts taken throughout the county mentioned above but the details provided with the issue of vehicle licences and the records of the receipt books of a prosperous local garage. The traffic counts were taken at the request of the Ministry of Transport each year. They enabled both the Ministry and the County to estimate the future rate of growth in the number of vehicles using the road networks and thus to prioritise their maintenance programmes. The count also itemised the different users of the highway be it, stock, lorry or motorcar and their assumed weight. The counts, as intended, only revealed the number of each type of user of the highway at a particular location on a particular highway. No indication was given of the number of occupants in any vehicle or its speed or age, as it passed the enumerator. It was of course impracticable for the enumerators to accurately obtain such information for each vehicle they saw.

The third chapter evaluates the efforts of the County Surveyor's department to improve the county road network so as to provide a safer environment for its increasing vehicular use. The County Council had created a Roads and Bridges Committee at the turn of the century. In 1907 its department consisted of only one officer – G. H. Jack the County Surveyor and Bridgmaster. Indeed, the full staff of all the departments of the County Council at this time numbered less than a dozen. The County Surveyor was well aware of the inadequacies of the road surfaces inherited from the previous century. Jack took pride in the fact that he was not forced to close any road through disrepair as a result of the financial limitations created by the First World War. Such was his enthusiasm that he had by 1923 been able to experiment on short lengths of highway with five different solutions to the

question of road surfacing. He favoured bitumen coated granite laid cold. It provided a strong material and could be laid cold for small areas and hot for large areas. This solution was the first occasion of its use in England, and was to become the generally accepted norm by the end of the decade. However, when applied hot both experienced labour and fine weather were necessary neither of which were in plentiful supply in Herefordshire. Jack included in his duties the role of County Architect. This was removed in 1927 when the committee decided to follow the example of other counties and create two separate departments each with their own chief officer. By the 1930s the county technical officers supervised the highway design and construction work of the district council engineers. The major work that was accomplished in the 1930s on trunk roads in the country as a whole was designed and supervised by the Ministry – a procedure that ensured that a uniform approach was presented to the driver, particularly at a time when the finer points of both design and construction were still being evolved. However in practice this did not affect Herefordshire since there were no such proposals of any significance in the county in the inter-war years. In 1939 the staff of R.G. Gurney the County Surveyor with its increased road programme stood at twenty nine.

The fourth chapter examines the attitude taken by the police forces in Herefordshire to the new emerging form of transport. The key sources of information for this chapter are held by the HRO and include an extensive record of the quarterly and annual reports of the Chief Constable for the complete period. Records also exist for the proceedings of the rural and urban courts. The history of the local police in Hereford has been thoroughly researched by Forrest and Hadley.¹⁸ They touch upon the antecedents of the Chief Constables who were in charge of the county in the inter-war period and the effect they had on the efforts of the force to provide a safe road system for the county. Shakesheff provides a useful background describing the formation in the nineteenth century of the police force in Herefordshire.¹⁹ He examined the relationship in Herefordshire of the force with its public which, according to local oral evidence, altered little until the mid twentieth century. The modern police force owes its origins to the County Police Act of 1830 which created the rural constabularies with a recommended ratio of police to population of 1:1000. This ratio was never achieved in Herefordshire during the inter-war years. Critchley's account of the evolution of the police force in England

and Wales, notes that the system 'was built up with little regard to principle' but required the 'popular support' of the public to function adequately.²⁰ The increased vehicular use of the country's road network presented the police force with an increased work load. The 1935 report of Sir Llewelyn W. Atcherley, the Inspector of Constabulary, noted with concern that single country beats were being neglected. Critchley provides a detailed historical setting for the evolution of the police force in the country as a whole and much detail upon the question of the relationship of the police force with its public. He notes that the appointment of a county chief constable was often given to a man who was a 'thorough gentleman' with little police experience whilst a borough chief constable more often had risen through the ranks.

The police constables on appointment were required solely to possess a sound body and mind. They had to establish a sometimes difficult relationship with the public in their area. Howard Taylor examines the problems faced by the police in the period 1900 to 1939 for the country as a whole and suggests that police road accident statistics were managed for political expediency.²¹ The government wished to promote the emerging lucrative industrial production of motor vehicles and sought to minimise its disadvantages. Further, in the country as a whole in the fifteen years after 1919, non traffic, non-indictable prosecutions halved to be replaced by traffic offenders. The evidence available from the Herefordshire courts indicates that the number of traffic cases in the inter-war years remained at approximately thirty per cent of the total number of cases brought to court. Emsley has looked in particular at the regulation, by the police force, of motor traffic in this period.²² The law, he suggests, had always been deployed by the police to regulate traffic but motor vehicles travelling at greater speeds was a new danger. Emsley considers that:

the development of the motor car, and its increasing availability to middle-class families, was, bringing members of a social group, who hitherto had had virtually no contact with the police, into regular conflict with them. In the summer of 1928 the Home Secretary made 'a pressing personal appeal' to all chief constables that they should urge caution on their men in the way they behaved towards the public on the roads. Stressing the Bobby's unique qualities, his good humour and impartiality was an additional way of seeking to check the new and damaging confrontations between policemen and members of the middle class on the roads.²³

Jeremiah notes that the Government in response to the rising number of deaths on the roads in the country as a whole in the mid 1930s funded a children's Safety Crusade which published *Speed the Killer* with its emotive line drawings as shown below:



Figure I-4
'Speed the Killer', 1937⁵

The length of time that it took the Police to bring the cases involving traffic offences to court was not in the interests of the force which was, in any case, under strength in Herefordshire for the whole of the inter-war years. In the country, as a whole, the number of fatal road accidents doubled from the mid 1920s to the mid 1930s. Foreman-Peck has looked at the change in public response to these accidents, and compares the policies adopted in other countries to control the problem and their effectiveness.²⁴ The inter-war years saw Italy and Germany embarking upon the construction of *autostrada* and *autobahen* but France and the United Kingdom favoured the gradual improvement of the existing road network.

Figure I-5 Road Safety Campaigns

Pugh argues that life in the inter-war years was often brighter than would have been expected by the economic upheavals of the period. Campaigns for road safety bore fruit in the 1934 Act²⁵



Figure I-6 Pedestrian Safe Streets

The press encouraged the concept of a brighter life by suggesting that streets were safe for pedestrians. The Picture Post in 1938 published a photograph of a street 'relatively safe for children'²⁵



The thesis did not find in the statistics presented, to the committee by the Chief Constable, that in Herefordshire the number of fatal road accidents increased with the increase in the volume of road traffic. Between the years 1928 to 1938 for which records have been kept at the HRO they remained, apart from 1935 (twenty seven), constant at twenty or less. Although the number of recorded injury only

accidents in the county did double in the period of 1928 to 1938, reflecting the increased vehicle use of the network, the majority of this increase (eighty eight per cent) occurred in the first three years. These figures were accepted without comment by both the county members and the press. This would suggest that by the early 1930s the public in the county had accustomed itself to the dis-benefits of the new mode of transport.

Notes

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2. A J P Taylor, *English History 1914-1945*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, (1975 First Published 1965). 379.
3. S O'Connell, *The Car in British Society 1896-1939*, Manchester University Press (1998), 115 R. Davis *Death on the Streets: Cars and the Mythology of Road Safety*, Leading Edge Press (1993). 37.
4. P Bagwell and P Lyth, *Transport in Britain from Canal Lock to Gridlock*, Hambledon (2002). 94.
5. D. Jeremiah, *Imaging of Motoring*. 12. and *Representations of British Motoring*, Manchester University Press (2007). 92.
6. G. Maud, A Woman needs a Car from *Good Housekeeping Motoring Section* (October 1938). 171-176.
7. English County, *A Planning Survey of Herefordshire*, West Midland Group on post-war reconstruction and planning, Faber and Faber (1946)
8. E Heath Agnew, *History of Hereford Cattle and their Breeders*, Duckworth (1983). 109.
9. C Hopkinson, *Herefordshire Under Arms a military history of the county*, The Bromyard and District Local History Society (1985)
10. HRO O/L 430-431 T59/4-9 Roads and Bridges Committee Minutes 1919-1939
HRO C/56/1 et seq Herefordshire County Standing Joint Committee 1919-1939
HRO 35/184 Hereford City Watch Committee 1919-1929
HRO L15/3-5 Dore Petty Sessions 1921-1924, 1932-38
HRO L15/1-2 Bredwardine Petty Sessions 1929-39
HRO H38/15-42 Hereford City Petty Sessions 1919-1939
11. HRO O/L 387 AW 13 10-24/29-39 Traffic Counts 1923-1939
12. J E Dunabin, *The Hereford Bus*, Omnibus Society (1985). 107-117.

13. F E Coley, *Thoughts and Memories of Years Ago*, Orphans Press Leominster (2003). 18.
14. P Wilkinson, *Bulmers of Hereford* David and Charles (1987) ISBN 0.7153 9116-X
15. R. Perks and A. Thompson, *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge (1928). 21
16. The Oral evidence of G. Gwilt (born 1928) and J. CHallen (born 1914) both of the Bronyard area was given in interviews with the writer between 2005 and 2007. They have both read the section of the thesis which make reference to the information they kindly offered. In recognition of this they append here their dated

I, Ann Hargreaves - daughter of J. Challen
can confirm that my father knows and agrees
with the use of the information he has supplied.

AHargreaves 29.7.08.

I, Rose Stovell - daughter of G. Gwilt can confirm
that my father knows and agrees with the use of
the information he has supplied.

RStovell 2.08.08

17. HRO Vehicle licences AB77 box 6 – Fryers Garage AA45/10
18. G Forrest and E Hadley, *Policing in Hereford and Leominster*, K A F Brewin Books (1989)
19. Timothy Shakesheff, *Crime, Petty Crime and Social Crime: Rural Herefordshire 1800-1860*, PhD Thesis, Coventry University (1999)
20. T A Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, Constable (1967), 143. 145.
21. H Taylor, A crisis of 'Modernisation' or Redundancy for the Police in England and Wales 1900-1939, *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol No 39.1 (1999). 114. 124.
22. C Emsley, The Law, The Police and the Regulation of Motor Traffic in England 1900-1939, *Historical Journal*, Vol No 36.2 (1993). 358-381.
23. C. Emsley, *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, Longman (1996). 147.
24. J Foreman-Peck, *Death on the Roads changing national responses to motor accidents. The Economic and Social Effects of the spread of Motor Vehicles* (ed. T Barker), London Macmillan (1987). 265.
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CHAPTER 1 – THE LOCAL SCENE IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Introduction

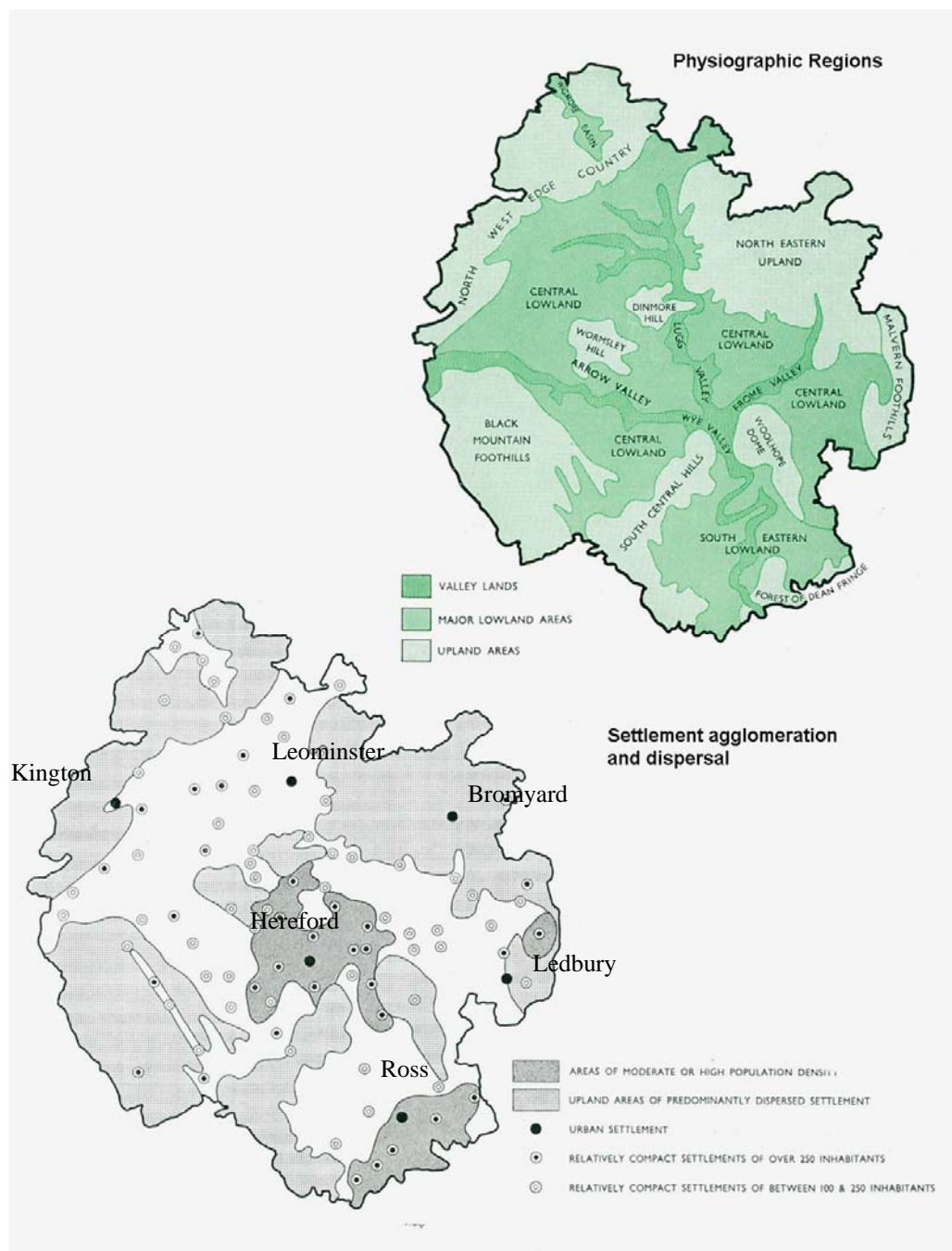
A study of road management would be incomplete without an examination of the social background of the users of the road. The First World War greatly affected the country as a whole changing the social and economic structure inherited from the Edwardian era. Herefordshire underwent similar changes. This chapter will investigate the social picture of the county inherited in 1919 from the War and will consider the changes experienced during the inter-war years. This has been assisted by a planning survey, mentioned in the Introduction, undertaken in 1946 on post-war reconstruction and planning. It made use of the 1931 population census to provide a physiographic and demographic picture of the county. The railway presence in the county declined in the inter-war years in the face of an increase in the number of private motor cars and omnibus operators who offered both weekly trips to the local market town, occasional visits to London and the seaside. The public relationship with the police was a learning curve faced by both sides, particularly where the new traffic legislation was involved. The court records in Herefordshire reveal that, whilst traffic volumes increased throughout the two decades the 1930s saw no increase in the number of traffic accidents. This seems to suggest that a degree of mutual harmony had been achieved in the county in the 1930s.

Changing Social Patterns

Herefordshire in the first half of the twentieth century had changed little in 100 years. Mee in his record of the English counties comments that the county of Herefordshire is Middle England's farthest west and was, in 1938, 'a noble piece of our Motherland far too little known'¹. Joad who had walked over a large part of England praised with Mee the 'first-rate unspoilt country' of the Welsh Borders including Herefordshire.² The county at the end of the Great War was influenced by two strong arguments. On the one side was the sense of tradition, beautiful countryside and a measured progress through life within a well structured social hierarchy, on the other the disintegration of large estates through casualties in the recent conflict and the rise of the agricultural worker through land ownership and a

newly acquired source of income from his wife. To this was added the arrival of the internal combustion engine – cars, omnibuses and lorries – and enjoyable changes opened up for many people in the county. The 1946 planning survey includes plans showing both the physiographic regions and the settlement agglomeration and dispersal of the county making use of the 1931 census.³ These are reproduced below:

Figure 1.1 Physiographic regions and settlement agglomeration and dispersal – Herefordshire 1931 (scale 1:550,000)



The census revealed that the urban areas of the county – two municipal boroughs and four urban districts occupied just three per cent of the total area of the county but accommodated thirty seven per cent of the total population of 111,767. Hereford alone contained twenty per cent of the total population of the county. The population of the rural section of the county, which in 1931 was 69,300 was thinly spread over the remainder of total area of the county, there being only four parishes with a population of over 1000. The areas of upland militated against the development of large settlements. The total population had fallen from the 1921 census when it was found to be 113,189. The trunk road network of the county was, and currently still is, the A49 connecting Ross with Hereford and Leominster to the north together with the A40 running east/west through Ross connecting the Midlands with south Wales. The rest of the road network consisted of principal roads connecting the urban settlements with interconnecting minor roads. The maintenance and improvement of which was labour intensive and costly exercise for the county council to shoulder. This road layout is illustrated in Figure 2.1 in Chapter Two.

Taylor has remarked that the number of lives lost during the Great War in the country as a whole was three quarters of a million.⁴ The conflict affected the people of Herefordshire no less than the rest of the country. As mentioned in the Introduction the number of lives lost in the country as a result of the conflict was 1893. The number of injured was many more, and constantly reminded the public at large of the casualties of the recent conflict. Max Hastings recalls that:

Limbless ex-servicemen victims of the First World War remained familiar figures on the streets of most cities with their accordions and banjos and collecting boxes.⁵

The public's wish for a simple life was reflected at both local and national level. Graham Stewart writing in *The Times* recently notes that in the inter-war years in the country as a whole there was only a low response for local councillors particularly in the counties.⁶ He observed that:

In 1947 the *Fabian Quarterly* published a study of turnout in the 1930s. It revealed an extraordinary degree of apathy. Despite the fact that local government was raising sixty per cent of its revenue from its ratepayers, the

majority of councillors were returned unopposed. Although the boroughs did somewhat better, turnout for county councils averaged between eleven per cent and twenty per cent.

The local experience in Herefordshire reflected this attitude. The county council's triennial elections in March 1937 were subject of a leader article in the *Hereford Times* of 20 February 1937.⁷ It revealed that of the nominations announced two days before 'no fewer than forty two (seventy five per cent) of the retiring members were re-elected to the Council unopposed.' One new member was also elected unopposed. Only thirteen seats, seven of which were in the city, were to be contested. Taylor considers that the same relaxed attitude existed in Central Government. Baldwin was a member of Bonar's Law Cabinet in 1922.⁸ He became Prime Minister later that year and retired amidst public plaudits from the cabinet in 1937. Taylor notes that he took pride in being a member of Bonar's Law Cabinet which was described 'as being of second class intellects', reflecting the desire of the public at large to lead a simple life and enjoy the pleasures that could be obtained for example through the use of motor vehicles. The idea that the attitude of the public merely sought a simple life was challenged by some contemporary writers who considered that it was indicative of a greater malaise. Beatrice Webb in 1932 considered that manual workers were 'slipping down the slope of casual and sloppy thinking'.⁹ Marwick quotes Hirst (1934) who went further and considered that the First World War had brought 'moral evils (and) social degeneracy' to the country.¹⁰ Marwick, however, agrees that these positions are exaggerated. He considers that the working class, in the early 1920s were 'in real terms ten or twenty per cent better off than before the war.' Historians remain divided notes Marwick on the question of how far the redistribution of finance brought about significant changes in the class structure. He remarks that:

Professor D. C. Marsh is sceptical, but other recent work has tended to suggest that at the upper levels of society taxation did have a significant effect.

The change in the social structure of the rural areas was encouraged by the increased taxes born by the landed classes. These had been in existence from the early 1900s. Wilde in his comedy *The Importance of Being Ernest* which was premiered at the James Theatre in London on 14 February 1895 also comments on

this point.¹¹ His character, the elderly Lady Bracknell, speaking of the present day said:

what between the duties expected of one in one's lifetime and the duties extracted after one's death, land had ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure.

The increase in the percentage of owner occupied land continued throughout the period of the study. Sheail has argued that the proportion of owner-occupied farmland rose from eleven per cent in 1913 and twenty per cent in 1921 to thirty six per cent in 1927, and that between 1918 and 1922 one quarter of the land surface of Britain changed hands.¹² A local example is provided by Kyre Park which was an estate of some 3,000 acres situated seven miles north of Bromyard.¹³ The owner Mrs Baldwin Childe died in 1929. Her son had died in 1915 in the First World War and the estate was offered to her nephew but he did not want the responsibility of managing an estate in a financially insecure climate. It was sold to the tenant farmers in lots of up to 200 acres. The new owner occupiers had thereby acquired a sense of authority. Pamela Horn suggests that their wives added to the family finances by running fruit and vegetable stalls from the farmhouse or in the local markets.¹⁴

Unemployment was a problem in the inter-war years. Hobsbawn noted that unemployment in the country as a whole in the 1920s did not fall below ten or twelve per cent.¹⁵ At the end of October 1929 the New York Stock Exchange collapsed. It heralded three years of increased unemployment and profound damage to the political and social structure of Europe. In the slump of 1932-33 unemployment in Britain rose to between twenty and twenty three per cent. Crowther notes that the industrial Midlands and North appear to have been particularly affected by unemployment – the worst effects of the slump however were avoided by the rural counties such as Herefordshire whose main industry was agriculture.¹⁶ The Planning Survey of Herefordshire has indicated that the agricultural use of the land in the county in 1937 was 116,000 acres of arable of which 4,000 were hops, 22,000 acres of orchard, 320,000 acres of permanent grass and 29,000 acres of rough grazing. The principal motive power in the agricultural

industry was still the horse which, particularly for the arable areas, involved a significant labour content, and thus assisted in reducing unemployment. The Planning Survey recorded that the 1931 census noted the number of regular agricultural workers employed in Herefordshire represented twenty nine and a half per cent of the total workforce. The 1931 figure for England and Wales, as a whole, was only five and a three quarter per cent.

The Decline of the Railways

The railways were the major mode of transport apart from the horse and 'shanks pony' in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The increase in the use of road transport in the early twentieth century revealed the need for an integrated national transport policy. The road transport operators were unencumbered by the overt legislation which affected the railway companies and could adapt vehicles for a number of uses. Thus they formed a considerable threat to the finances of the railway companies. A planned approach was suggested in 1922 by the Geddes report.¹⁷ He suggested the wholesale nationalisation of all forms of transport – road, rail, canals, inland waterways, trams, ports and harbours, air transport together with electric power. Such a radical approach met with much opposition. The resultant legislation in 1923 based upon the report restricted itself to the consideration of the large number of railway companies since at this stage in the early 1920s there was little evidence, apart from speculation, that road transport would, within a decade, become such a dominant factor in national life. The railway companies were small and duplicatory and to be able to offer a better overall service to their customers a national approach was clearly required. The government reduced their number to four principle operators. Scott has remarked that whilst the railway companies were slow to respond to the threat from road haulage the restrictive regulatory framework of the 1921 Act prevented a more flexible approach.¹⁸ Labour troubles did not assist the finances of the railway companies. The net receipts of the four main-line companies fell short of their 1913 level throughout the two decade period apart from 1922. In some years especially in the 1930s the shortfall was more than one quarter. In manpower terms the railway companies did nationally reduce their costs – in 1921 735,870 persons were employed but by 1939 this figure was

reduced to 588,517. However against this management improvement the inability to close loss-making branch lines under the 1921 Act led to further reductions of their income.

Herefordshire lay within the area of operation of the Great Western Railway (GWR) and the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS). An example of line closure local to Herefordshire concerns the GWR line from Eardisley to Kington in the west of the county which had been closed because the tracks had been removed for the war effort.¹⁹ The local farming community pressed the company to reopen the line which it did in December 1922 offering a passenger service of three trains daily in each direction one of which included goods. Falling receipts however resulted in the closure of the line again in 1930. The two rail companies serving Herefordshire did make efforts to increase their volume of passengers and offered trips to the sea and local events. The *Leominster News* carried their advertisements, the 3 January 1930 edition offered a GWR trip to the Birmingham races from Leominster for 5/- return starting at 7.55am and returning at 5pm.²⁰ The excursion also stopped at Wooferton, Tenbury Wells (Worcestershire) and Cleobury Mortimer (Shropshire). Blackpool had become the most popular seaside resort in the country.²¹ In the mid 1930s it built a bathing pool which held not 'mere hundreds of people but thousands.' To extend its season into October it illuminated the whole front – miles of it – with 'hundreds of thousands of coloured lights.' The 7 July 1935 edition of the *Leominster News* printed an LMS offer for an excursion from Hereford to Blackpool for 11/6 return – third class.²² The train left Hereford at 3.30am and arrived in Blackpool at 7.55am. The return trip was from Blackpool on the same day starting at 11.20pm and arriving back in Hereford at 4am the next day, a marathon effort. These long hours militated against the popularity of the railway. Also road transport received much new custom when a rail strike in October 1919 virtually isolated Herefordshire and the General Strike of 1926 again temporarily closed the railways serving the county. The road network was more flexible and was increasingly used by the public. Use could be made of lorries which, as against the omnibus or train, were able to accommodate bulky luggage such as deck chairs to Blackpool. They could also be utilised for a short trip to the local public house.

The Increase in the use of Road Transport

The County Surveyor had inherited the 19th century solution to surfacing a carriageway – waterbound stone. This faired well when the vehicles were slow moving and light in weight. The problems of dust and ill-constructed road bases did not arise. The maintenance periods were between three and five years. This equilibrium did not continue with the advent of the heavier and faster moving motor vehicles. The road surface clearly needed strengthening to be able to accommodate these vehicles and still retain an acceptable maintenance period. An early solution to surface strengthening was tar spray. A length of the main road, the A49 at Dinmore Hill, in 1915 began to show signs of distress and the solution considered sufficient then – tar spray - was used.²³ This solution did reduce the problem of dust of which there was much complaint. However the surface did not last long - six months at the most - when used by the new heavier motor vehicles, rendering maintenance expensive. Tar spray continued to be used in the County but increasingly with a rolled stone chip finish since the spray only surface proved slippery to both vehicles and animals. The Ministry subsequently discovered in 1923, consequent upon research into the matter, that the water runoff, from a tar spray only surface, polluted the adjacent waterways.²⁴ They, henceforth, did not allow this form of surfacing. The County Surveyor devoted considerable energy to investigating new forms of surfacing and by 1923 had experimented with four solutions one of which later became the national norm. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

The early years of motor travel in the 1920s were recalled by reminiscences of members of the Women's Institute. One such by Kay Williams from the village of Withington some three miles to the east of Hereford recalls the part transport played in village life. The concept that the use of motor vehicles could become part of everyday life was novel. The distances covered did not need to be great to excite the wonderment of the local populace. The village had:

redolent visits of the Fish-and-Chip shop owned by a Mr. Coleman. A CWS bakery van also visited Withington, and as well as supplying bread to the residents would also bring folk's grocery orders from the town.²⁵

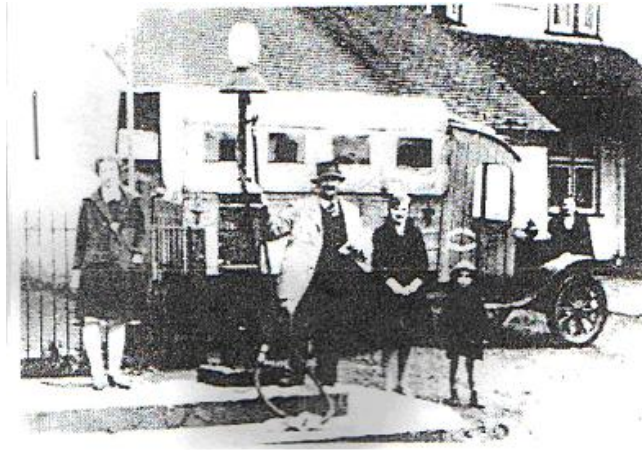
The enthusiasm of the public for the newfound pleasure of easy shopping and community activities provided a ready market for the bus industry. Village sport became an important feature of rural life much reported in the local press. Buses and converted goods lorries enabled village football and cricket teams to improve their fixture lists. Mobility allowed teams to travel and thereby improve their standards. The *Leominster News* on 2 January 1920 reporting on sporting events within its catchment area noted that eight football matches and three hockey matches were played over the holiday season.²⁶ All the participating teams were from within the county apart from one match. This was the football match between a local team Presteigne St Andrews who soundly beat the visitors from West Bromwich by two goals to nothing. The visiting team had travelled some 50 miles on this occasion. The edition of 2 June for the same year reported on three cricket matches between local teams. By the mid 1930s the sporting fixtures had increased. In January 1935 the paper reported on the events of the Hereford Football League which comprised two divisions each of ten teams. They also gave details of an air-gun league which comprised of twelve local teams. The 7 June edition of the same year noted a similar increase in cricket matches, the paper reported on fourteen of these. Few Herefordshire villages boasted a charabanc, but there were goods lorries, which when swept out, could be used to carry passengers, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 1.2 Two early adaptations of ex-WD Ford T vehicles²⁷

2- Mr W. G. Morris' Ford T lorry bus (note the extra raincoats provided for his passengers)

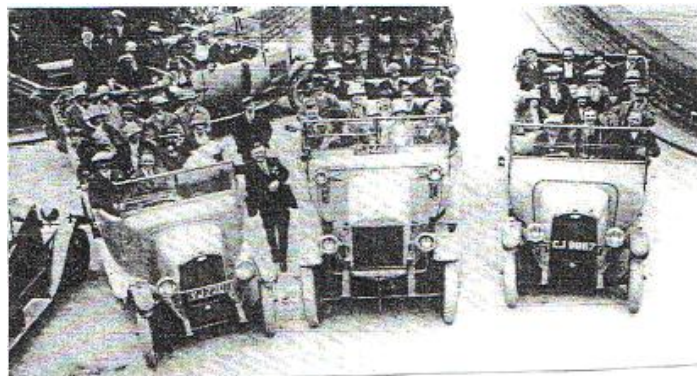


1 - Mr Oliver Howe's Ford T with his petrol pump and his significant passenger comforts



Mr Challen mentioned in the Introduction recalls motoring exploits of the 1930s. He was employed as a lorry driver in the 1930s and used to take families to Blackpool, when travelling up there on business. His lorry provided more commodious space than either the train or the bus for their baggage and trappings which sometimes included deck chairs. He would collect them a week later. Dunabin notes that The Merton Company of Hereford had acquired a 45 hp ABC vehicle in 1919 which they modified to take twenty passengers and their luggage. They offered trips to London – a journey of between nine and ten hours. The first vehicle left the centre of Hereford at 10.40 am on Tuesday the 30 September 1920 and returned the following day. The London trip was a success and encouraged imitation. Works outings became popular, one such to Elan Valley Reservoir in 1921 is shown below:

Figure 1.3 A works outing to the Elan Valley Reservoir in 1921 ²⁷



On 20 July 1920, Mr King's company the Hereford Motor Co., started a regular charabanc service to Aberystwyth eighty miles away and another service to Weston Super Mare. The outward journey was on Saturday and returning the next day. Advertisements appeared in the local press.

Figure 1.4 An early advertisement in the *Hereford Times* ²⁷

Motor Coach Tours



DAILY TOURS will be run (except Sundays) to the following places, subject to sufficient passengers being available and circumstances permitting

ROSS	CHEPSTOW
SYMONDS YAT	HAY
MONMOUTH	BUILTH
TINTERN	ELAN VALLEY
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	

Weekly Runs to ABERYSTWYTH, following the Wye to the Source, EVERY SATURDAY

For particulars of Daily Tours see small ads. Passengers are advised to book their seats in advance, at the Office.

ST. GEORGE'S GARAGE
EIGN ST., HEREFORD

WHEEL SEATING PLAN CAN BE SEEN

PRIVATE OPEN & CLOSED CARS FOR HIRE
LARGE GARAGE — REPAIRS

TELEPHONE: 1124

Sometimes the public's enthusiasm became over-stretched. An example was provided by an omnibus trip to Worcester in September 1925 when a record was achieved by Mr Mathews who took sixty four passengers from Hereford to the Worcester Hop Fair in a converted W. D. Karrier lorry and returned with ninety passengers. Roads were narrow and rough, and tyres were hard. Passengers sitting for hours became covered in grey dust on fine days, and on wet days their situation was far from perfect, even when the cumbersome hood had been erected. But Dunabin remarked that the public did not mind the inconvenience and accepted that,

on occasion, they had to resort to "Shanks pony". The Rev Coley remembers the Yarranton brothers, who had a garage at Eardiston, four miles east of Tenbury Wells.²⁸ They ran a bus service in the early 1920s from Kidderminster to Tenbury Wells, which is located some seven miles north of Bromyard. The journey covered a distance of some twenty eight miles. He observed that:

the entry to Tenbury from Kidderminster was down Stokes Hill into the town. The new conveyance not only carried a full complement of passengers, but on top of the roof accommodation for poultry, potatoes, vegetables, eggs, butter for the Round Market. Coming down Stokes Hill was achieved with smoking brakes, going up meant "all out" and a walk up to the top. Medicine and tablets were delivered to cottagers across fields, messages of good or ill fortune were delivered to villagers en route.

In the 1920s the two principal bus companies operating out of Hereford city were Birmingham and Midland Omnibus Company (BMMO - Midland Red) and the Hereford Transport Ltd. Each had fleets in excess of twenty vehicles. In the early 1920s vehicles were prone to breakdown. Midland Red were very conscious of preserving a façade of efficiency. The company decreed that no vehicle was to be seen being towed back to the Hereford depot. This meant that kerbside repair work was the norm. Once on the Weobley route, some twenty miles north of Hereford city, an engine had to be reassembled – an exercise which took most of the night. On completion water was needed and obtained from an old lady in a nearby cottage who made the condition that the mechanic first repaired her gramophone.²⁷

A complete list of bus operators in Herefordshire in the inter-war years has been compiled by Dunabin using his own records and those of local bus companies. The table below is an adaptation of his list:

Table 1-5 Omnibus Operators in Herefordshire 1919-1939

Year	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
No of Operators	6	43	9	8	7	12	14	5	13	16	14
Year	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	
No of Operators	22	13	12	13	16	23	14	12	12	13	

On an annual average basis the number of operators from 1919 to 1939 remained largely constant at fourteen.

The stabilisation and reduction of the number of vehicles in the bus industry is confirmed by Hibbs, who notes that the Traffic Commissioner recorded that from 1931 to 1937 for the country as a whole, including London, the number of operators reduced in number from 6,434 to 4,798 but that the number of vehicles rose slightly from 46,230 to 49,574.²⁹ Opportunities were increasingly created in the inter-war years in the country as a whole as well as Herefordshire, encouraging the use of a car or omnibus for transport. Alford has noted that about half of the twenty million workers, in the country as a whole, in 1939 were entitled to holidays with pay and so were able to take advantage of this new mobility.³⁰ Shorter local trips had become more frequent. By 1922 some of the younger wives began to join their husbands in the local pub. The younger generation - the sixteen to twenty five year-olds - greatly enjoyed the dance halls –six pence a head but one shilling on Saturdays. Coach trips evolved their own games and songs ‘the first child to see the sea at Blackpool would win a sweet.’³¹

The motorcar industry as mentioned above was seen to have potential for the unemployed and as a result received much governmental support. Plowden observed that:

Between 1919 and 1920, forty new makes of car were introduced; and between 1920 and 1925 a further forty-six. The *Economist* commented: ‘If one wished to moralise on the credulity of human nature, a fit subject might be that of motor-car manufacturing companies.’ Many new companies, the writer went on, simply acquired empty premises, and issued prospectuses with photographs of cars and generous estimates of profits, never previously having made a car.”³²

It was a new industry, of which Plowden noted that:

nobody in Whitehall knew anything about. Government officials indeed knew so little about the motor car that they were dependent on the advice of the manufacturers and were reluctant to take action where this advice was not unanimous.

A new car could be purchased via the *Leominster News* for approximately £150 in the 1930s. This cost was not inconsiderable and the use of hire purchase schemes were widespread in the 1930s. O'Connell notes that the use of hire purchase schemes was a delicate subject in those days.³³ A 1931 book on direct marketing offered advice on 'delicate' matters which listed 'deferred terms' alongside 'intimate personal hygiene'. O'Connell remarks that this attitude was still strong in 1936 when the chairman of a leading hire purchase provider the Motor Finance Corporation stated that as far as he was aware 'no dealer, as yet, attempted to use hire purchase facilities as an advertising stunt to sell his vehicles to the public.' The papers in the 1920s and 1930s carried many advertisements for second hand motor vehicles. Examples abound: *The Leominster News* in 1926 advertised a Morris Cowley in good condition for forty eight pounds and a 1927 Francis Barnett sports motor-cycle for twelve pounds. Also in the *Hereford Times* (1937) a 1931 Triumph 8 saloon for thirty five pounds and a Triumph combi motor cycle for three pounds and five shillings were offered. The Rev Coley confirms that between the wars the sale of second hand cars was a flourishing market and they could be obtained for considerably less than those advertised in the local papers. Cars could be acquired in the 1920s for as little as five pounds, whilst in the 1930s a satisfactory model could be obtained for only twenty five pounds. The wage of a farm labourer, however, at this time in the mid 1930s was around thirty shillings a week with sometimes free milk and timber for fuel, which restricted his ability to purchase even a second hand vehicle.

Tourism in the 1930s became a national pastime. The flexibility offered by road transport was eagerly embraced by the public throughout the country. O'Connell notes that the inter-war years saw an explosion of literature and societies proclaiming the joys of the countryside.³³ Rural life fascinated the urban public. Joad however found antagonism from the country folk towards tourists.³⁴ The solution he was offered by a local taxi driver was to 'sterilise them, stop them breeding. There are altogether too many of them.' He himself had found for some time that the motoring classes had disrupted his relaxing country walks. Brace has found similar spirits to Joad abroad in the 1930s.³⁵ She notes that Matless considers that not only was there an expansion of car ownership, but bus travel and communal charabanc trips to the countryside became more popular in the inter-war years.

These tourists were sometimes seen to display ‘conduct unbecoming.’ Litter, noise, flower picking and disobedient bathing contrasted with the behaviour of ‘the right leisure user.’ Hereford was eager however, to welcome visitors when the Three Choir Festival was held there triannually.³⁶ The composer Edward Elgar born in Malvern, had declined in popularity in the whole country as a whole after the First World War but remained popular locally. He conducted many of the Three Choir concerts and presented a flamboyant figure in his court dress and decoration.

The police force in the inter-war years was presented with the possibility of a greatly increased workload in relation to road safety. With the decline in the early 1920s of other forms of crime, police forces saw this new workload as a means of retaining both staff levels and local influence. New problems however arose. The parish constable in Herefordshire had a large area to supervise and had to consider carefully the strength of the case he proposed to bring to court before apprehending a malefactor. The rural force accepted that a degree of horseplay could exist between the local constable and his public. The constable knew the populace who lived within his jurisdiction and was able to ignore the teasing if no harm resulted. The relationship of the police force and the public in the 1920s relevant to traffic offences was a learning curve for both sides of the argument. It relied upon the intellect of the local constable which may not have been accomplished considering the minimum entry requirements for the constabulary were only that he should be of good physique and character.

The question of what constitutes a safe road in terms of the number of accidents which occurred upon a particular length has been the subject of much discussion. O’Connell quotes from a *Guardian’s* educational supplement of 7 December 1993 on road safety. The first sentence of which was:

More than half a million people have been killed on Britain’s roads this century but that figure would be far worse were it not for the many road-safety measures that have accompanied the history of the motor car.³³

He finds it difficult to imagine half a million deaths from any other cause being treated in so casual a manner. If the number of accidents which resulted in a

serious injury are included the figure is likely to be of the order of three and a half million.³⁷ This, in any account, is a very considerable number. Taylor has remarked that:

the number of those killed on the roads in 1934 was actually greater than those killed in the same period some 30 years later, when the number of cars had increased by six times.⁴

The public attitude towards fatal road accidents was exemplified by Colonel Moore-Brabazan, a leading spokesman for the motor lobby who when the subject was raised in the House of Commons in 1934 said ‘over 6000 people commit suicide each year, and nobody makes a fuss about that.’³²

Critchley considers that during the inter-war years relations between the police and the motoring public were on the whole cordial.³⁸ The motoring public were in general middle or upper class and thus as Perkins notes since ‘most magistrates and most jurors were middle class it became increasingly difficult to convict motorists for dangerous or negligent driving’³⁹ Even if a conviction was secured Plowden has shown that the average fine for driving offences was a little more than one pound and for dangerous driving only about five pounds. There is little evidence to suggest that in Herefordshire similar circumstances did not exist between the two police forces and their public.

Conclusion

The public after the rigours of the First World War looked for an easy life. Whilst the inter-war years saw significant unemployment in the country as a whole the farming community escaped its worst effects with wives contributing to the family income. Landed estates in the county came under financial pressure and were sub-divided and often sold to tenant farmers encouraging in the new owners a sense of responsibility and adventure. Although the use of railways in the county declined in the inter-war years they were eagerly replaced by the new bus companies. The early buses were dusty and prone to breakdowns but were popular,

offering trips to the local market, cinema, dance hall and sporting events as well as further a field.

The safety of a road network is governed by the attitudes of its users. The alignment and structure of the road itself, if substandard, offers impediments to speed and visibility. The improvements carried out by the County Council in the inter-war years to the road network of this rural county allowed safer vehicular use and speeds. The evidence available from court records of the county, suggests that the number of fatal road accidents which occurred in the county did not increase in the 1930s as a whole. A detailed analysis of the road accidents which were recorded in the previous quarter was put forward for committee consideration by the Chief Constable. Neither the committee minutes nor the press revealed any concern by the county members over the number of accidents. Chapter Two will consider the increases in the vehicular use of the county road network, Chapter Three will look at the road improvements carried out by the county surveyor and Chapter Four will discuss the policing of the county road network.

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CHAPTER 2

The Growth of Road Transport

Introduction

A study of the management of the safety of a road network requires, as a necessary prerequisite, a knowledge of the number, type and weight of vehicles which used it, also the level of pedal cycle, pedestrian and stock use, together with an investigation of the improvement to the road network carried by the highway authority to enhance road safety which will be considered in Chapter Three. These two chapters form the heart of the thesis. To ascertain the level of use of a road network anywhere in the country, as a whole, a count was taken at typical locations in the network of the number and type of road users which were noted between the hours of 6am to 10pm every day for a week in the August of each year. They represented the likely maximum use of the road network. In Herefordshire there were approximately fifty such sites. The information was required by the Ministry of Transport to fix the level of support grant for the road's programme of each county and enabled each County Surveyor to direct his efforts to the sites in most need of improvement and to estimate future increases in use. These counts enable a detailed picture of the vehicular use of the road network to be formed and the changes in use which occurred over a period of time. The standard form for the count, supplied by the Ministry, included an estimate of the weight of each type of vehicle and was used in the design of road improvements. This study will consider the counts taken in Herefordshire in order to establish the variations which occurred in the use of the network in the inter-war years.

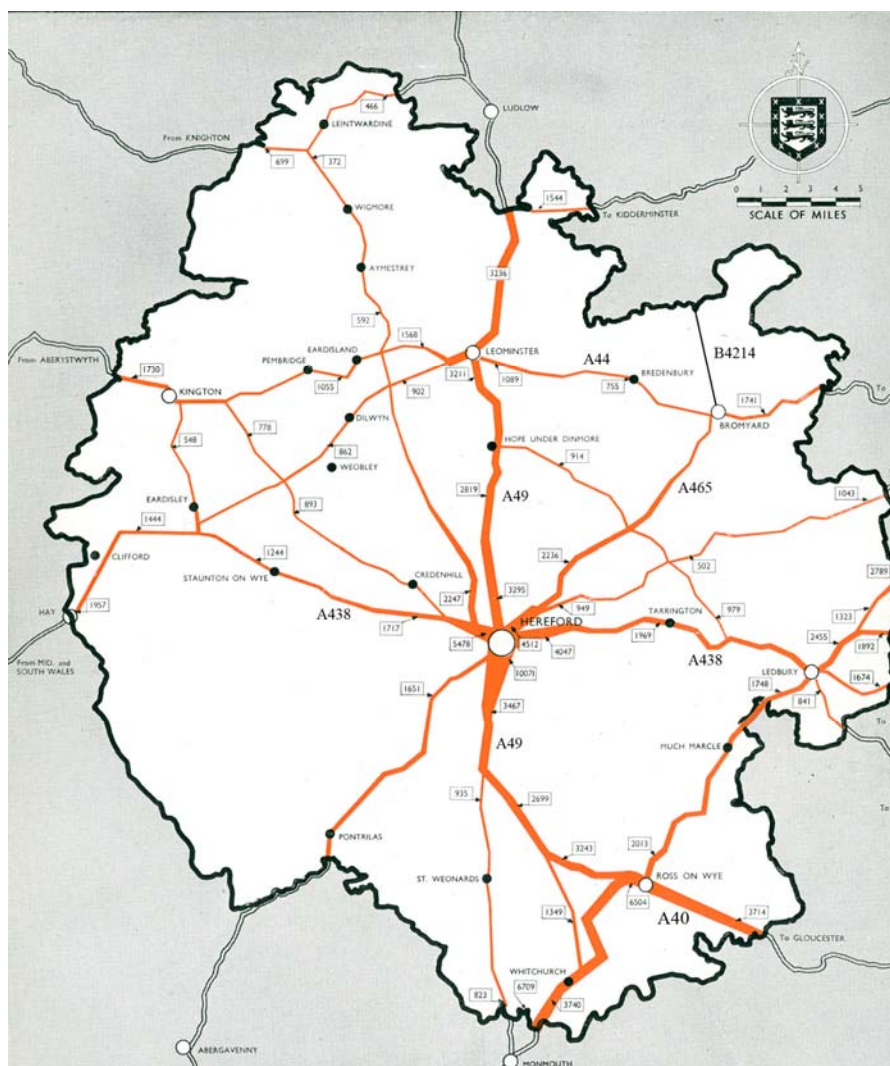
The principal source of information of traffic use of the county road network in the inter-war years are the records of traffic counts kept in the HRO.¹ The use of the county roads in the 1920s by stock on the hoof was significant and was included in the information required by the Ministry. However this particular use was much reduced in the 1930s and no longer required by the Ministry. In general terms the increase in vehicular use of the road network between the wars was found to be about half that of the country as a whole. Other sources referred to in this chapter

include the records of the issue of vehicle licences by the county council and garage vehicle sales.^{2,3} This chapter will commence with a study of the traffic counts taken in the county. The issue of vehicle licences and garage sales will then be considered to compare the information they reveal with the results of the traffic count study. The chapter will conclude with a comparison of vehicular use from the busiest sites around Hereford city to the less populated areas in the west of the county.

Traffic Counts

The records of the traffic counts on the road network in Herefordshire for the inter-war years which have been kept in the HRO are not complete. However, sufficient records are available for a reasonable study to be attempted. The 1938 traffic census (average daily tonnages) of the 1946 West Midlands Planning Survey, illustrates the overall picture of the road network and is reproduced below:

*Figure 2.1 Road traffic census of Herefordshire in August 1938*⁴



Two rural sites and six sites in the environs of Hereford city were considered in detail, for this thesis, to present the variations in vehicular use that existed across the county. The first rural site was on the A40 trunk road at a point five miles to the east of Ross. The A40 is a trunk road connecting the Midlands with South Wales and carried seasonal tourist traffic. The second rural site was on the B4214 two miles to the north of Bromyard. This Class II road is a local distributor and accommodated principally locally generated traffic. The years of the counts chosen are the most widely spaced in time available in the HRO to illustrate the extent of the changes in vehicular use of the road network which occurred over the twenty year period. The traffic counts available for the A40 site were taken in 1928 and 1935. Table 2.2 is a condensed version of both those counts and to allow for a more detailed appreciation are retained in figures, an approach taken in all the traffic counts used in this chapter.

Table 2.2 Traffic counts A40 (east of Ross) for 1928 and 1935⁵

1928 (August 13 to 19)		No.(total)	Wt. (tons)	(total)
Motor vehicles	cycle	1,675	415	
	car	5,379	8,606	
	van	306	765	
	omnibus	470	1,883	
	lorry and trailers	560	3,898	
	Sub total	8,390	15,568	
Horse vehicles	light	71	64	
	heavy	2	7	
Total		8,463	15,639	

1935 (August 12 to 18)		No	%change	Wt	(tons)	%change over 1928
		(total)	over1928	(total)		
Motor vehicles	cycle	1,144	68	286	69	
	car	8,839	164	11,137	129	
	van	502	164	1,255	164	
	omnibus	399	85	1,795	95	
	lorries and trailers	635	113	5,588	143	
	Sub Total	11,519		20,061		
Horse vehicles	light	20		25		
	heavy	<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>		
Total		11,540	136	20,088	128	

The 1928 count on the A40 included a total of 407 pedal cycles, eight horses (led or ridden), seven cattle and four hand-carts. No mention was made of pedestrian use. The 1935 count made no mention of stock or hand carts but noted that the total number of pedal cycles for the seven days was 889. This was over

twice the figure for 1928. It represented the greatest increase over the seven years of a particular type of transport. The use of motorcycles fell in popularity with the advent of the small car in the 1930s. The number of motorcars counted in the week increased over the seven years by sixty four per cent, which was approximately one third of the increase in the country as a whole. Their weight increased by only twenty nine per cent which reflected the move by the motorcar industry in the 1930s towards a greater production of smaller and relatively cheaper cars.

The omnibus operators became subject to the Road Traffic Act 1930 and as a consequence their vehicles had reduced in number. They had increased in individual size and were thus virtually the same total weight and as a consequence continued to test the structure of the road. The number of lorries increased also in the seven years from 560 to 635, however their weight increased to a greater extent by 143 per cent. Increases of these proportions did create problems in highway maintenance which will be discussed in the next chapter. The 1935 count included a total of 299 pedestrians who passed along the road. They represent two and half per cent of the total number of users of the highway. Their inclusion in the form indicated a change of perception of the users of a main road. The greater speeds of the motor vehicles encouraged the Ministry to follow the suggestions of the Royal Commission 1929 report and construct footways which in the case of this site were between four feet nine inches and eight feet in width. With the advent of a greater number of vehicles moving at a greater speed pedestrian safety was put at risk. The A40 was a tourist route from the Midland area to South Wales and it saw increased numbers of motorcycles, car and omnibuses at the weekend. The 1928 count saw a total number of motor vehicles of 1775 in the sixteen hours of the Sunday count. This figure was one and three quarter times that of the average weekday use and one and a quarter times the use on the Saturday. The 1935 count also revealed heavier traffic volumes at the weekend but not to the same extent. Figures of one and quarter times the average weekday (3500) for the Saturday count were recorded whilst those on Sunday were a little below the weekday average. This change in the use of motor vehicles from predominantly weekend use in 1928 to almost no change from the weekday average in 1935 is indicative of the changed perception and use by the public of motor vehicles. By 1935 they had lost their initial glamour and had become everyday utility objects for those who could afford them.

The second site on the secondary road the B4214 was at a point some two miles north of Bromyard. The first count kept in the HRO was in 1923, the second chosen was from 1939. The counts have been shown in greater detail than those of the A40 in order to illustrate the large changes which occurred in the sixteen years between the two counts. These changes included the disappearance of the measurement of stock on the hoof and the large increase in the number of motor cars and lorries. The two counts paint a nearly full picture of the change in use over the two decades of this local road.

Table 2.3 Traffic counts B4214 (north of Bromyard) for 1923 and 1939 ⁶

August 1923									
Item	Assumed average weight (tons)	M no.	T no.	W no.	T no.	F no	S no.	S no	Total no.
Pedal cycles	0.09	63	80	80	99	54	123	48	547
Horses (led or ridden)	0.5	5	27	9	5	6	12	4	69
Cattle	0.3		18		127	1		5	151
Sheep and pigs	0.1				456				456
Hand-carts and barrows		12	13	9	11	5	12		62
Motor Vehicles									
Motor cycle	0.25	20	25	20	21	10	23	15	134
Motor cars	1.6	25	36	34	55	20	25	17	212
Motor van	2.5	5	3		7	5	1		21
Motor omnibuses	6.0	6		4	5		3		18
Motor lorries	8.0	6	2	6	4	5	3		26
Horse vehicles:									
Light vehicle (one horse)	0.9	32	46	33	115	41	49	9	315
Heavy vehicle (one horse)	1.75	6	12	6	22	3			49
Heavy vehicle (two or more horses)	3.4	2	4			1	2		9
August 1939									
Motor cycle	0.25	20	28	26	23	25	41	42	205
Motor car	1.25	201	187	157	187	155	187	366	1440
Motor omnibus	6.0	1	1		9		4	8	23
Motor van	1.75	20	25	33	21	27	25	8	159
Motor lorry four-wheel	50	41	32	35	42	38	19	7	213
Motor lorry eight wheel	13.0	5		5	5	5	3		23
Pedal cycle	0.09	55	47	46	42	63	61	53	367

The 1923 count reveals, for a local road, the balance of motor vehicles and horse drawn vehicles – the former only eight per cent more. If pedal cycles, stock and hand carts are included, motor vehicles are only one quarter of the total number of users of the highway. The table indicates the very large change in approach to road transport which occurred on local roads over the two decade period. The

motor car increased in number by over six times. The greatest growth, however, was in the number of motor lorries which increased over nine times in the period. This increase had the effect of reducing the periods between road maintenance and thus increasing its costs. The growth in the number of lorries was reflected in the national scene. Scott has noted that in the country as a whole the number of goods vehicles doubled in number from 62,000 in March 1919 to 124,000 in August 1922 and led to an increase in weight of road haulage from six million tonnes in 1921 to forty million tons in 1938.⁷ The Introduction mentions that Gwilt, who lives in the Bromyard area, recalls that much overloading of the goods vehicles occurred.⁸ It was common for a two and half ton second-hand lorry to increase its capacity overnight to five tons by its new owner and be further increased by their drivers, with careful driving to seven and a half tons. The use of the B4214 by stock was considerable in the 1920s and continued to a lesser degree until the Second World War. Gwilt recalls that throughout the 1930s, he and his father, a local farmer of Stoke Bliss, drove up to fifty cattle on the hoof northwards along the B4214, a distance of five miles but only to the spring and autumn markets in Tenbury Wells (in Worcestershire). The 1923 figures show the dominance of market day – Thursday, with Saturday seeing the greatest number of pedal cycles being used perhaps for sporting and social reasons. The 1939 figures clearly show the dominance of the motorcar which was more evenly spread as on the A40 throughout the week. The high number on the Sunday reflected a continuance of weekend shopping and leisure use. The use of the omnibus is clearly seen on market day and at the weekend. The numbers for motor vans, motor lorry both four-wheel and eight-wheel were fairly uniform apart from a drop at the weekend which would be expected. Pedal cycles were used consistently throughout the week.

The vehicular use of the roads in and around Hereford city itself was greater than in the rural areas. Traffic counts taken in August 1925 and 1935 at six locations on principal roads into the city have been kept in the HRO. These are shown in a condensed version in Table 2.4 below:

Table 2.4 Traffic counts at six locations in the area of Hereford City 1925 and 1935. Figures shown are totals for a week in the August of each year.⁹

Census Point	Road	1925				1935			
		Motor cycles, cars, 'buses & vans	Horse drawn	Pedal cycles	Stock and carts	Motor cycles, cars, 'buses & vans	Horse drawn	Pedal cycles	Pedestrians
1. Tupsley	A438	3535	424	2612	259	7,334	190	3,518	902
2. Three Elms	A4110	1718	348	3558	553	5,524	289	4,200	1,646
3. Holmer School	A49	4825	492	2746	161	11,858	194	5,405	not recorded
4. Aylestone Hill	A465	3257	941	2960	721	9,181	277	7,216	"
5. St Martin's War Memorial	A49	11415	2439	18671	1326	25,716	826	38,774	"
6. White Cross	A438	7526	1175	8783	482	17,123	307	12,186	"

It can be seen that the number of horse drawn vehicles reduced significantly by approximately two thirds from the 1925 levels to 1935. In 1935 at each census point their number was either five per cent or less of the total number of motor vehicles. The manoeuvring and parking of a horse drawn vehicle was likely to have been more difficult in the mid 1930s when the number of motor vehicles using the same streets had more than doubled in the previous decade. The numbers of pedal cycles recorded in both counts were however significant. At St Martin's War Memorial in 1935 near the city centre they were one and a half times the total number of motor vehicles. The figures at this location were high since the A49 provided the only bridge in the city centre from the south over the River Wye. The high volume of pedal cycle traffic would not have been unnatural in an urban context where journey lengths tended to be short. Coupled with this was the question of the possible problem of parking the car at the destination. The year of these counts was 1935 so they can be compared directly with the second count on the A40 mentioned above. At the A40 count the dominant presence was occupied by motor vehicles, horse vehicles were only two per cent of that figure and pedal cycles seven and three quarters per cent, both small figures when compared to the city of Hereford. The volume of the motorised forms of transport on the A40 were similar to those recorded in the city indicating an even spread of increase in the number of motor vehicles throughout the county rather than a concentration in one particular location. The counts taken at St Martin's War Memorial and White Cross were selected for further study being those where most detail in the HRO records

was provided. St Martin's War Memorial is located on the A49 just to the south of the river and is adjacent to, as mentioned above, the sole river crossing from the south to the city centre. The details of the numbers of motor and horse vehicles at the count are given in table 2.5 below:

Table 2.5 Traffic counts at St Martin's War Memorial 1925 and 1935 ⁹

Vehicle Type	1925		1935	
	Number	Weight (tons)	Number	Weight (tons)
Motor cycle	3346	837	3170	793
car	6974	10353	17150	21625
van	538	1345	2916	7290
omnibus	441	2646	1345	5891
lorry	669	5416	1172	9671
Horse drawn light	2064	1559	658	822
heavy	375	626	168	420
Total	13907	22782	26542	46512

The predominance of the motorcar in both number and weight in both counts is clearly shown. Horse drawn vehicles in 1935 only accounted for three per cent of the number and weight of the total traffic volume. White Cross the second site is located some one and a half kilometres from the centre of the city on the A438 and was not so heavily trafficked as the War Memorial site. It provided a feeder road into the city centre from the west and northwest. The details of the motor and horse drawn vehicles at this count are given below:

Table 2.6 Traffic counts at White Cross A438 1925 and 1935 ⁹

Vehicle Type	1925		1935	
	Number	Weight (tons)	Number	Weight (tons)
Motor cycle	2075	506	1851	462
car	4326	6922	12129	15297
van	340	850	1152	2880
omnibus	382	2291	842	4213
lorry	453	3592	1149	10085
Horse drawn light	832	771	278	342
heavy	326	609	29	72
Total	8754	15541	17430	33358

The total number and total weight of vehicles carried by the road structure at each of these two points doubled in the years between the counts. The increase in weight of lorries was even greater (two and three quarter times) at White Cross. The greater weight of the traffic clearly put more strain upon the structure of the urban carriageways which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The records available in the HRO allow comparisons of traffic growth to be made on other principal roads in the rural areas of the county. Two such are shown below. The first of these is on the A44 Leominster to Kington main road some two miles west of Leominster at Cholstrey. The A44 in the inter-war years ran through Lawton Cross and Eardisland towards Kington and central Wales. It offered a tourist route from the Midlands to central Wales. The counts which have been kept at the HRO are from 1928 and 1935, so they fall within the timescale of principal traffic growth and are illustrated in a condensed version in the table below:

Table 2.7 Traffic count A44 at Cholstrey - 1928 and 1935¹⁰

The figures given are the totals for the seven days of the count

		1928		1935	
		No	Wt (tons)	No	Wt (tons)
Motor vehicles					
	Cycles	371	92.75	686	171.5
	Cars	1263	2020.8	3498	4392.05
	Vans	61	152.5	504	1260.0
Omnibuses	4 wheel single deck	44	1760.0	251	1129.5
	6 wheel single deck	4	29.0	1	7
	Lorries	43	301.0	162	1325
Horse vehicles					
	Light	80	73.4	45	56.25
	Heavy	17	29.75	16	40.0
	Pedal cycles	476	42.54	1842	
	Pedestrians			429	
Total			4501.74		8381.3

The 1928 count noted that during the August week: twenty three horses (led or ridden), 114 cattle, 206 sheep and pigs and two handcarts also passed along the road. The 1935 count did not include these details since they were no longer of significance or required by the Ministry. However, the later count did include the number of pedestrians using the road, an indication that their use of the carriageway - there were no footways on this length of road - presented a potential hazard which needed consideration. The 1935 count also included details of the width and construction of the road.

The second location is on the A465 at the Burley Gate Schools. These are located some six miles from Hereford on the Hereford to Bromyard Road and lie

adjacent to the A465/A417 cross roads. The A417 connects Hope under Dinmore on the A49 with Ledbury and carries a little under half of the traffic of the A465. The counts which have been kept at the HRO are also from 1928 and 1935 and are illustrated in a condensed version in the table below:

Table 2.8 Traffic counts A465 at Burley Gate Schools –1928 and 1935 ¹¹

The figures given are the totals for the seven days of the count

	1928		1935	
	No	Wt (tons)	No	Wt (tons)
Motor vehicles				
Cycles	592	148	512	128
Cars	1086	1738	2197	2771
Vans	134	335	302	755
Omnibuses 4 wheel single deck	67	268	120	540
Lorries	223	1595	390	3216
Horse vehicles				
Light	75	68	24	30
Heavy	36	98	12	30
Pedal cycles	1081	98.1	1186	
Pedestrians			154	
Total		4348		7470

The 1928 count on the A465, as with the A44 count included details of stock and handcarts. In the August week there were thirty four horses (led or ridden), forty seven cattle, 102 pigs and sheep and one handcart. The 1935 count made no mention of stock or handcarts but included a count of pedestrians which totalled 154 for the week. In terms of weight of vehicle the A44 location accommodated heavier total loads for all vehicles except lorries-the A465 carried two and a half times the weight of these particular vehicles, although in terms of total weight carried by the road the A465 only carried eighty nine per cent of that carried by the A44. These two counts reveal that in the 1920s stock was commonly driven to market along the main roads of the county. Whilst this was also true for the A40 the use was much smaller in the 1928 count, only eight horses, seven cattle and four handcarts were recorded for the whole seven days of the count.

Amongst the records of traffic counts held by the HRO are those of forty six locations taken in August 1935 in rural locations on Class 1 roads throughout the

county. They enable an overview of the use of the county road network to be assessed. These are grouped within the County Surveyor's divisions and are set out in the table below:

Table 2.9 Traffic Census totals on Class I Roads by division 1935¹²

Item	Northern	Southern	Eastern	North Western	Central	Leominster out-parish
Motor cycles, cars and 'buses	18764	77943	37173	24184	41031	19095
Motor vans	3389	11559	6178	3715	6225	2621
Sub total	22153	89502	43351	27909	47256	21716
Horse drawn vehicles	419	839	401	337	546	330
Cycles	6911	16989	8620	7352	15575	6822
Pedestrians	3555	12642	3341	3354	4619	2382

It can be seen that the Southern division was the most heavily trafficked and in this rural area by the mid 1930s horse drawn vehicles only accounted for a small proportion of the total use. Overall pedal cycles and pedestrians together provided between twenty per cent and forty five per cent of the total usage of the county roads which emphasises the limited 'invasion' by motor vehicles in the rural areas.

Vehicle and Driving Licences

The HRO has kept very extensive records of the vehicle licences issued by the County Council throughout the period of the study. The 1934 Act, required new drivers to pass a driving test and a special license and test were required for drivers of heavy goods vehicles. Representative years 1920, 1930 and 1938 were studied in order to illuminate the changes in vehicle usage. The number of vehicles licensed for each of the three years is set out below:

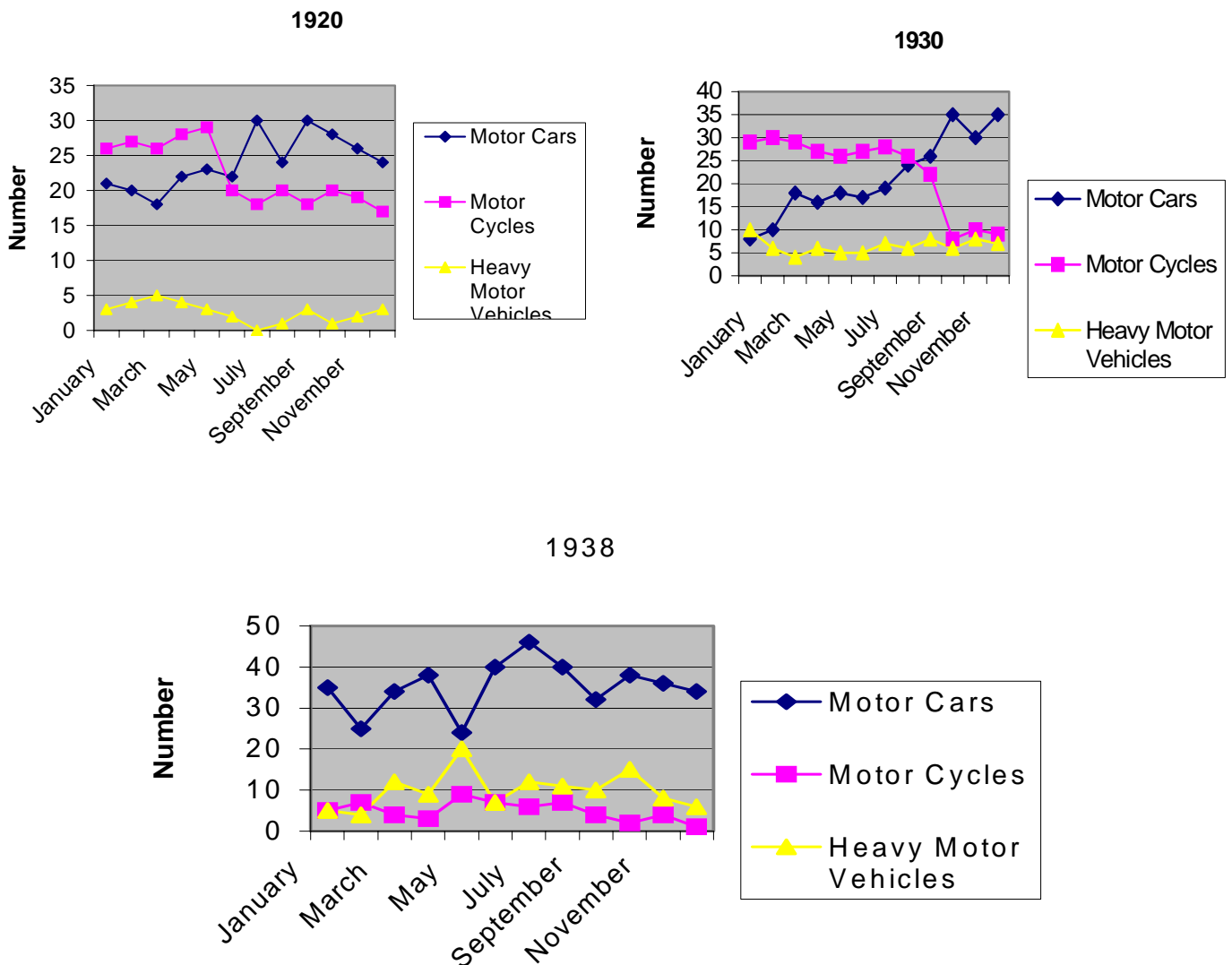
Table 2.10 Motor vehicle licences 1920, 1930 and 1938¹³

Item	1920	1930	1938	% variation 1938 over 1920
Motor cars and vans	432	538	865	200
Motor cycles	497	272	119	24
Heavy motor vehicles	37	119	248	670

A striking factor illustrated by this table was the reduction in 1938 in the use of motorcycles to one quarter of the 1920 figure. This reflects the information of

the traffic counts shown above. The increase in number of heavy motor vehicles lorries and omnibuses which rose nearly seven times over the eighteen years illustrates the popularity of these vehicles and the flexibility they offered compared with the use of the rail network. The number of motorcars and vans doubled in the same period. The information enables a picture to be obtained of the variation of applications throughout the year. The three graphs below illustrate these variations:

Figure 2.11 New Vehicles licensed in the years 1920, 1930 and 1938¹³



The number of motorcars in 1920 increased in the summer months suggesting their recreational usage. By 1930 the number of motorcars was increasing throughout the year indicating that they had probably entered into all aspects of the public's life. The year 1938 saw a flattening of the graph which confirms that in the county the motor car had become a staple of every day life. The figures for both

motorcycles and heavy motor vehicles for the three sample years, followed the trends shown in table 2.10. The information in the records also covers the registration number and make of the vehicle, the initial, and sometimes the final date of registration and often the address of the last owner. These details were investigated for the first hundred vehicles in each of the three years, 1920, 1930 and 1938. The figures for 1920 revealed eighty six addresses which in the table below are categorised as being urban if they are within the boundaries of Hereford city, Leominster, Ross or Ledbury, elsewhere they are taken as rural.

Table 2.12 Location of licensed motor vehicles 1920¹³

	Urban	Rural
Motor cars	12	26
Motor cycles	26	16
Heavy motor vehicles	5	1

The number of motorcars dominated in the rural areas whilst their position in the urban areas was taken by the motorcycle. The heavy motor vehicle goods lorry and omnibus were principally located in the urban area suggesting that in 1920 the horse drawn vehicle was still used to a varying degree throughout the week in rural areas as has been illustrated above in the 1923 traffic count on the B4214. The information available of the years 1930 and 1938 was more limited but, such as it was, followed the trend illustrated in table 2.12 above. The overall urban/rural mix indicated that there was a general enthusiasm for the new mode of transport on the road. The *Hereford Times* of January 19 1938 carried an article on the growth of road traffic in Herefordshire. The paper noted that both the number of vehicle licences and driving licences granted by the city council had increased over the previous three years (year ending 30 November). Their figures are tabulated below:

Table 2.13 Driving and first time vehicle licences 1934-36¹⁴

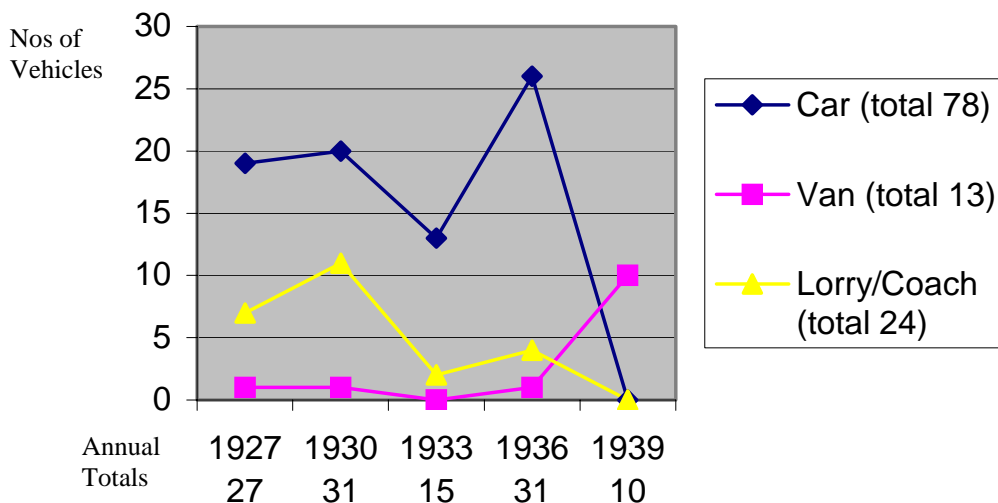
Year	Motor vehicles licenced for the first time	Driving licences	
		Provisional	Renewals
1934-35	1279	569	11344
1935-36	1335	1694	11423
1936-37	1405	1984	12207

The table illustrated the increases in motor vehicle usage in the mid 1930s and showed the large increases in numbers of provisional licences issued over the same

period. One in every six drivers was a learner in 1936/7 but had probably been driving for a number of years without the need to acquire a license.

The HRO also has the receipt books of some local garages. James Fryer the owner of a large complex offered a variety of cars at his outlets in Leominster and Hereford. The receipt books which gave details of vehicles sold for 1927, 1930, 1933, 1936 and 1939 were studied. These years were selected in order to give an illustration of the change in sales in the study period. The results are illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 2.14 Vehicle Sales Fryer's Garage 1927-1939 ¹⁵



The sale of motorcars was the most fruitful and revealed the economic slump of the early thirties, the recovery and the effect of the declaration of war in 1939. Sales of the heavier vehicles again reflected the economic changes of the period with the surprising variation in 1939 when they represented the majority of the sales. The time for earnest endeavour had clearly arrived for a second time in the century.

Conclusion

The traffic counts which have been kept in the HRO enable an analysis to be attempted of the changes in the use of the county road network in the inter-war years. The counts illustrate the predominance of the county town Hereford in vehicular terms. The city saw the largest use of pedal cycles, their use to a lesser degree was seen also throughout the county. They remained an important road user throughout the inter-war years. Taken together with pedestrians they still, in the mid 1930s, accounted for between twenty five and forty five per cent of the motor-vehicle usage of the main rural county road network. The increases in the use of motor vehicles on the county roads varied with the status of the road. The secondary roads saw increases of many times in the number of car and omnibuses they carried in the inter-war years. A study of the issue of vehicle and driving licences in the county confirmed the increased use of motor vehicles which was revealed by the traffic counts. The variation in the number of vehicle licences issued throughout the year with, in the 1920s, the greatest number of new cars in the summer months illustrated the fact that the motorcar was probably used then for predominately recreational purposes. The receipt books of the local garages also reflected these changes. Throughout the inter-war period there was a flourishing market in second hand vehicles. Hire purchase facilities, although not broadcast, were available. The motorcar became a more accepted accessory to life in the rural areas by the mid 1930s. The number of motor cars using the country roads doubled in the period from the mid 1920s to 1930s whilst the number of lorries increased by a factor of three. Although these increases were less than the national average they nevertheless provided the county council with problems of finance in their efforts to create an improved road network. This will be discussed in the following chapter, which will chronicle the efforts of the County Surveyor towards this end and together with this chapter form the core of this study. The increased vehicular use of the county road network created the increased possibility of road accidents. The improvements to road surface and alignment enabled vehicles to travel faster. A highway code included in the Road Traffic Act 1930 included advice to drivers to handle their vehicles with care. Chapter Four will study the efforts of the local police force to preserve road safety and will comment upon the degree of safety which was considered acceptable in the 1930s but in subsequent decades abhorred.

Notes

1. HRO O/L AWB 10 – 24, 29 – 39 Traffic counts 1923 – 1939
2. HRO A59/9 to AB77/11 Vehicle licences 1923 – 1939
3. HRO AA45/10
4. West Midlands Group Planning Survey 1946. 181.
5. HRO AW13 1060 A40 1928 and 1935
6. HRO AW13 B4214 1923 and 1939 see Appendix II for the Form No. 155 (ROADS) report
7. P. Scott The Growth of Road Haulage 1921 – 58: an Estimate. *Journal of Transport History* 3rd series 19 (1998). 120-165.
8. Oral Evidence – Geoffrey Gwilt 2005
9. HRO AW13 A438, A4110, A49 and A465, 1925 and 1935
10. HRO AW13 1067 A44 Cholstrey
11. HRO AW13 1032 A465 Burley Gate Schools
12. HOR AW13 Class 1 Roads, 1935
13. HRO AB77/14 1920, 1930 and 1938
14. *Hereford Times* 9 January 1938
15. HRO AA45/10 1927 to 1939

CHAPTER 3 – THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAFER ROADS

Introduction

This chapter will look at the efforts of the County to improve the alignment and structure of the road network in the county so as to provide a safer environment for the increasing number of motor vehicles. The road network, as a whole, in the early 1920s in the county had changed little from the Victorian times. The road was constructed with water bound graded stone on an alignment and width which was suited to horse drawn traffic. Chapter two has illustrated the increases in Herefordshire in the number and weight of vehicles using the road network. It is suggested that the experiments in different types of road surface that were carried out by the County Surveyor in the early 1920s, although of a modest nature, were very forward looking and ascertained that bitumen coated granite provided the best surface result. It was later in the 1930s to become the accepted solution used throughout the country. Improvements to the alignment of the roads, other than the removal of sharp bends and the widening of narrow lengths of carriageway, required significant areas of agricultural land for their implementation and as a consequence were resisted by the county council of this rural county. Few major road realignment schemes were completed in the inter-war years in the country as a whole and none in Herefordshire.

The chapter will study first the imperfections in the geometry of the road network which faced the County Surveyor at the end of the First World War together with his ideas of what constituted minimum layout criteria. The structure of the road will then be considered. The water bound graded stone had begun to show increasing signs of deterioration and dust as a result of the increased use by motor vehicles. The initial solution, tar spray, solved the question of dust, but had a short maintenance life, and was found to pollute any adjacent water courses and was abandoned by the Ministry of Transport in the mid twenties. The question of the most suitable surfacing material for a road was to be the subject of much discussion in the engineering profession in the 1920s. A meeting of the Municipal and County Engineers was held in Oxford in 1929 to discuss the many solutions available on the market.¹ The agreed outcome of the meeting did find favour with bitumen coated stone, but the inconsistency of the available supplies did not allow a secure answer.

This solution, however, was eventually established in the mid 1930s when supplies became more consistent. The difficulties the County Surveyor experienced in securing finance will be discussed in this chapter. These difficulties were to remain for the whole period of the study. A number of sources involving small amounts of money were pursued by the County Surveyor but they gave little boost to his works programme.

The works programme of the County Surveyor's department, however, did grow over the period of the study. The department took over the supervision of road maintenance and improvement from the County Boroughs. By the end of the 1930s the number of staff had increased to twenty nine from its original number of one in 1907 and included a training scheme by which staff could become chartered engineers.² The County Surveyor's detailed reports to committee enable a study to be made of the completed items in his programme. They reveal the changes in emphasis throughout the period. The improvements to the road alignment, which were accomplished, did not involve significant areas of agricultural land. The relationship Jack established with his committee was one of equals.³ The committee minutes reveal that apart from loss of agricultural land they accepted his guidance. The Ministry's request in the mid 1930s for county councils to produce a five year plan to enable them to prioritise their future works programme added a further problem for the County Surveyor.⁴ The five-year plan, in taking a future look at the road network, included the construction of bypasses to congested areas, which in Herefordshire involved the acquisition of agricultural land. An example arose at Lea on the trunk road A40, near Ross. The committee was strongly resistant to the idea of loss of agricultural land. However the need for action did not materialise as the improvement was not pursued within the period of this study. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of the public's reaction to the improvements that were achieved and the effect that the improvements had on road safety.

Alignment and Width

The road network in Herefordshire at the beginning of the 20th century was one, which had been created to cater for the needs of a public who walked to work, and horse traffic travelling at less than 10 mph. The increased use of motor vehicles

after the war brought complaints of the narrow and twisting carriageways from the public to the County Surveyor, for example, it was reported at the meeting of the County Highways Committee on 17 September 1921 that eight letters of complaint at the number of dangerous corners which existed in the road network had been received.⁵ One came from the Automobile Club, another from a local landowner Lady Milband and the remainder from local Rural District Councils reacting to public concern. The County Surveyor's annual committee report of September 1923 mentioned problems of alignment and width. He encouraged his committee to accept the fact that:

The narrowness, weak sides and sinuous character of the greater part of our rural road mileage is yearly becoming a great danger to all road users and if the traffic goes on increasing it will be unsafe to travel on them except at slow speeds. Even now one feels grateful to return home without a shock to one's nerves. Motor cyclists are becoming a terror on our roads, and charabancs fill some highways from hedge to hedge.⁶

An example occurred at the meeting of 19 June 1926 when Alderman Gosling pressed for an improvement on the A49 at the corner going down Dinmore Hill towards Hereford.⁷ At the bottom of the hill was located a railway station. He raised laughter from the other committee members when he said that unless the corner was improved someone would take a "short cut down to Dinmore Station when the road was wet." A safety fence was erected around the corner because any realignment of the carriageway would have been very expensive since the road was on a hill.

The narrowness of many of the roads in the county caused the County Surveyor in 1927 a particular problem with a member of his staff and illustrated the disjointed efforts of the county council as a whole to road safety. One of his tractor drivers had been fined a sum of £2 under a county bye-law which stated *inter alia*:

Where for a continuous length exceeding one hundred yards a carriageway of a width less than sixteen feet, a person in charge of a locomotive shall not enter until:

- (a) he shall have ascertained that throughout the whole continuous length the carriageway is clear of vehicles.⁸

The County Surveyor reminded his committee that there were 'scores of miles' of main road with a carriageway width of less than sixteen feet thus making a nonsense of the bylaw. He continued:

It is not desirable in these days that our men should stand their engines on the road while the mate walks several miles to see if the road has not a single vehicle upon it and even if he did so vehicles could enter on the road before he got back to his engine and further the driver could be summoned for obstructing the highway while waiting for his mate. If the bye-law is to be enforced it will be necessary for the Council to widen all their roads to over 16 feet

The 1920s saw significant increases in the vehicular use of the road networks throughout the country. The improvements necessary to the road network were carried out by each County Surveyor in his area. There were thus slight variations in the approach to solutions for each improvement across the country. The Ministry for the first time, in 1930, sought to co-ordinate these efforts.⁹ It issued a memorandum 336 (Roads) which set out details of appropriate criteria for horizontal and vertical alignment, carriageway widths and cross fall, visibility on bends, footways, fencing, kerbing, signs, location of telegraph poles and building lines. This rationalisation in design approach which, of necessity, was adhered to offered a degree of uniformity to motorists and assisted in road safety.

The Road Structure

The increased vehicular use, of the county road network, had made improvements to the structure of the road surface clearly necessary. The question of which type of improvement was a much more difficult problem. The idea of the use of bitumen coated stone as a surfacing material had been established in the early twentieth century. The County Surveyor of Nottinghamshire had patented in 1902 a method of mixing bitumen with ironstone slag or stone to produce a material which sealed the road surface.¹⁰ It established that the new road surface needed to be strong and could be achieved by a mixture of bitumen and stone. He named it 'tarmac'. In Herefordshire however, in 1915, when the surfacing of a length of the main road A49 at Dinmore Hill began to show signs of distress tar spray was used.

The spray reduced dust but suffered from a short service life - six months or less from a period of between three and five years some two decades before.

The County Surveyor's annual report of 1923 discussed in detail the question of road surfacing in Herefordshire. The lengths of the different classes of road in the County were:

Table 3.1 Variation in class and lengths of Roads in the County 1923⁶

Class	Length					
	Urban			Rural		
	Miles	Furlongs	Chains	Miles	Furlongs	Chains
<i>First</i>	25	1	8	149	4	1
<i>Second</i>	8	0	8	227	0	3
<i>Third</i>	3	7	9	89	3	5

The use of miles, furlongs and chains as units of measurement neatly illustrates the mindset of the engineers of the time. The use of miles only was to become a more common approach later in the twenties. The 466 miles of rural first and second class road, at the end of 1923, Jack noted, consisted of:

Table 3.2 Variations in road construction in the County 1923⁶

	<i>Miles</i>
<i>Waterbound granite macadam and limestone (Unimproved nineteenth century road construction)</i>	365¼
<i>Waterbound granite tar sprayed</i>	70¼
<i>New construction</i>	
<i>Waterbound granite coated with bitumen</i>	2
<i>Tarmac and tarmacadam</i>	22½
<i>Ashpatic slag</i>	2½
<i>Tar grouted granite</i>	3½

Jack had decided in 1923 to use limestone on a larger scale for foundations and edge strengthening, but he concluded that for the great bulk of the roadwork a hard stone was necessary and considered that Clee Hill basalt had no equal. The majority of the network was water bound macadam, the solution of the previous

century. A seventy mile length of which had been sprayed with tar, the remaining lengths indicated that Jack had assembled a range of available surface treatments to be able to contrast availability of material, cost and length of maintenance period. He noted that:

It should not be difficult to show that a low first cost in road making is not synonymous with economy. A road with a tarred surface lasts double the time of an untreated road and cost only 3d. per square yard more. A Tarmac or Tarmacadam road costs 3s. 6d. per yard more and lasts four times longer. In all cases it is very necessary to make sure there are no soft places in the foundations, and that the sides are sufficiently strong. On the whole Herefordshire Main Roads are in fair surface condition.⁶

He then discussed the use of tar and bitumen as a surface dressing and noted that:

Surface tarring has never been uniformly successful in this County. The reason is difficult to find. It is possible that the humidity of the atmosphere in this part of the Country and the fact that most of our roads are laid on damp clay may account for our indifferent success. I feel there is much more chance of success with Bitumen than Tar. The short lengths which have been laid in this County show signs of giving much longer life and less slipperiness. A short length of road has been laid with a new material, "Coldmix," which is Bitumen laid cold. If this is a success there will be a great demand for it. It is very easily applied. Can be laid in wet or dry weather (an immense advantage and saving of time and money). No plant or coal required. It does not splash on cars or pick up on the wheels. The work has been done by contract, the stone being obtained from the Doward Limestone Quarries. This was mixed with Tarvia and laid in two coats the bottom 2½ inch gauge and the top ¾ inch; this being finally scaled with Spramex (Bitumen) at the rate of three yards to the gallon for the first section of the work and five yards to the gallon later. At the time of writing the work presents an almost perfect appearance, and has been praised both by motorists and horsemen.

This solution was the first occasion of its use in England, and was to become the generally accepted norm by the end of the decade. The total tonnage of stone handled by the department during 1923 was 99,895 tonnes. This compares some fifteen years later in 1938 when the total tonnage of stone handled was 141,576 tonnes and an improved length of carriageway of sixty seven miles on which both hot and cold rolled asphalt were used.¹¹

The late 1920s still witnessed technical discussions on the question of a suitable road surface treatment. A paper was prepared for the January 1929 meeting, as mentioned above, of the Southern District of the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers at Oxford by H.U.Overfield, the Chief Assistant of the Oxford City Engineer's Department. He recalled the pre-1920 days when the County Surveyor used to quarry local stone and then lay and compact it on a suitable foundation. The surveyor had the choice of which local stone was the most suitable. But the increased volume and weight of road vehicles had reduced the maintenance periods of water bound macadam construction from between three and five years to less than six months. Tar macadam then became a common solution but the disintegration of the combined material following a loss of binding power in the tar proved to be a difficulty. Limestone rocks which had been naturally impregnated with bitumen (rock asphalt) had occasionally been used since the middle of the nineteenth century. Threadneedle Street in London, for example, was paved with Val-de-Travers asphalt in 1869. But due to its cost it was only used in heavily trafficked streets of large cities. A member of the audience who had had experience of heavy traffic in Hampstead, London found that wood paving on a properly constructed concrete foundation gave a minimum of vibration. There was a length of wood paving in Hampstead which he had laid some thirty years before which was 'almost as good as when laid.' Overfield observed that the commercial possibilities in 'highway work' were being exploited to the full since government grants in the 1920s had become available for road improvements. The result was a confusion of material and mixtures 'of complicated, sometimes secret and often doubtful composition.' He noted with concern the wide range of possible surfaces then available which in his opinion included:

Asphalt in one of many forms, wood blocks, stone setts of various kinds, cement concrete, macadam – tar or water bound, brick and probably in the near future, rubber.

Crude petroleum oils had begun, in the 1920s, to be brought into the country to the oil refineries where ninety per cent of the bitumen used in road work was distilled. The natural bitumens varied with the source of the crude oil and the synthetic bitumens varied not only with the source of the crude oil, but with the differing constituents used in manufacture. The manufacturing process involved a

void-less mortar made with suitable sand, very fine mineral filler and bitumen. The amount of bitumen required was found to range from nine and a half per cent to fourteen per cent according to the size of the filler. The use of hot asphalt was an expensive solution since the heating of the bitumen required fair weather which entailed delays to the work. Also the laying of the hot asphalt with steam rollers produced in the work carried out by Overfield an unacceptable degree of corrugation in the finished surface. The problem of corrugation was questioned at the meeting by a number of members of the audience. They suggested that the corrugations had been brought about by faulty workmanship and an ill-laid subbase. The difficulties attendant upon the use of hot asphalt had led to the search for an easier and cheaper solution. A number of alternatives were available, - cold asphalt, powdered bitumen and a solution patented by Karl Dammann, which mixed fine powdered rock dust with bitumen or tar. The Dammann mixture was lightly laid to twice the desired thickness, the final compression being achieved by the passage of traffic. Cold asphalts were made from an emulsion of bitumen in water and graded stone. This commonly used surfacing material was then laid on a lightly rolled stone base coated with a bitumen emulsion. The bitumen emulsion was powdered hard bitumen with fuel oil added as a flux together with stone and fine aggregate. The mixture could be made at ordinary air temperature and kept for several days before use. It was spread with rakes and consolidated with steam rollers. Although the immediate setting did not occur, as in the use of hot asphalt, within a few days considerable strength was acquired which continued to improve for the next several months. The agreed outcome of the meeting did point towards the benefits of bitumen coated stone, but efforts should be made by the engineering fraternity towards a greater consistency in supplies by the manufacturers than was yet available.

The traffic counts in the 1930s included details of the width of the highway at the location of the count, the road construction and its maintenance period. Chapter Two has looked at a variety of locations of counts in order to present a picture of the road traffic growth throughout the county. A similar exercise can be attempted which would illustrate the differences in highway width and the road structure which existed in the mid 1930s in the county road network.¹² The trunk roads in the county were the A40 in the southwest of the county and the A49 running north

south through Ross and Leominster. Two counts on the A40 at Lea were taken in the 1930s, in 1931 and in 1935. The particulars of the width and construction of the road were:

Table 3.3 Road Construction A40 (Lea)¹²

	1931	1935
<i>Width of metalled carriageway</i>	<i>21 ft</i>	<i>24 ft</i>
<i>Width of verges/footways</i>	<i>2ft and 5 ft</i>	<i>4ft 9 inches and 8ft</i>
<i>Form of construction</i>	<i>4 inches macadam Grouted with bitumen</i>	<i>1 inch non skid carpet on 4 inches tar macadam on 9 inches hardcore</i>
<i>Dates last resurfaced</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>1934</i>

The improvements to this trunk road – a main holiday artery – can be clearly seen. By the mid 1930s trunk road improvements were designed, financed and constructed by the Ministry, the effect of which can be seen in the degree of improvements. The A49 count was also taken in 1931 just south of the Broadward Bridge over the River Arrow some one and a half miles south of Leominster and revealed:

Table 3.4 Road Construction A49 Broadwood Bridge 1931¹²

<i>Width of metalled carriageway</i>	<i>22ft 6 inches</i>
<i>Width of footways</i>	<i>2ft 6 inches</i>
<i>Form of construction</i>	<i>3 inches tar macadam 8 inches basalt</i>
<i>Dates last resurfaced</i>	<i>1924</i>

A later count in 1935 at this location showed no change in circumstance. It can be seen that there was a clear difference in approach to these two sites which reflected the total weight of traffic carried in 1935 by each in seven days of the August count - the A40 46,512 tons-and the A49 16,740 tons. The A 40 carried some two and three quarter times the weight of the traffic on the A 49 and had received considerably more attention than the A49.

The three other sites considered in some detail in Chapter 2 were the A44 at Cholstrey some five miles west of Leominster; the A465 at Burley Gate Schools six miles east of Hereford and the A438 at a site located some fifteen miles west of the county town. At the A44 site the carriageway was eighteen and a quarter feet wide with a construction depth of between four and six inches of water bound macadam, no date was offered as to the last occasion of resurfacing. The construction of this road thus had not changed from Victorian times but was, in 1935, carrying a daily average of twenty three lorries weighing a total of 189 tons. This was a significant increase over the 1928 figures when the total weight of lorries in seven days of that count was only forty seven tons. Maintenance was clearly a problem. The 1935 count at Burley Gate Schools noted that although there were no footways the carriageway was twenty one feet wide and was surfaced with three inches of tar macadam on the old water bound foundation and had been resurfaced two months previously in June. The discrepancy in the road structure between these two sites appears surprising. It was true to say that the A44 accommodated one six wheeler lorry with trailer (pneumatic tyres) weighing eighteen tons in the week whilst the A465 accommodated two traction engines with trailers each weighing twenty three tons in the same period. It is tempting to suggest that the site nearer the county town would attract greater public notice and could carry greater loads in the future and thus received more attention. The third site is on the A438 some fifteen miles to the west of the city of Hereford. The traffic counts available in the HRO are from 1928 and 1931. The average daily tonnage in 1931 at this location was similar to the A44 site at Cholstrey some four years later in 1935. It would thus be likely that the road construction would be stronger than the A44 but not up to the level of the A465. This was, in fact, the case. The carriageway was eighteen feet wide with a four inch surface of water bound granite, but there were haunches constructed along each edge of the carriageway which were strengthened in 1929. The haunches were approximately three feet wide and constructed of two inches of tarmac and six inches of black stone. They provided edge strengthening for the carriageway and increased the maintenance period. The construction details at these three sites together with the A40 and A49 illustrate the priorities given by the County Surveyor to these highways. Clearly high traffic volumes as in the case of the A40 necessitated a strong construction. The other sites seem to demonstrate the

principle that the distances they were from the county town reflected their possible future use and reflected also the enthusiasm with which they were treated.

The other site considered in Chapter Two was the B4214 local road at a point some two miles north of Bromyard. The count, taken in 1939, noted that the carriageway was twenty feet wide with margins of between eleven feet and four feet. The construction was a layer of 'semi grouted' macadam, by which is perhaps meant to indicate that the macadam (water bound) had a partially applied layer of bitumen spray. It is noted that the same road, the B4214, at its entry into Ledbury some fourteen miles to the south where the traffic volume was some two and three quarter times that at the Bromyard site was surfaced in bitumen macadam, a much stronger material, although of unrecorded thickness but unlikely to be less than two inches and thus more capable of taking the larger and heavier vehicular use. The surfacing in the Hereford city sites indicate that the carriageway was surfaced in tar macadam on a carriageway width which varied according to location. The figures mentioned above form a logical pattern reflecting the vehicular use made of the roadway and reflect a methodical approach taken by the highways department. Gurney, the County Surveyor from 1933, continued the approach of his predecessor. He made an attempt in 1939 to construct a concrete road surface. The work, however, fell foul of faulty equipment, high unit costs and lack of expert labour. It was not pursued. The end of the 1930s saw the establishment in Herefordshire of the use of hot rolled asphalt, although expensive, for the larger areas of carriageway wearing course and the cheaper and more adaptable cold asphalt for small areas of maintenance and patching.

Finance

During the years immediately following the First World War the funding of the County Surveyor's department came solely from the County Council rates.¹³ The need for and the financing of road improvements were to become a constant subject of discussion at committee meetings in the 1920s. At a meeting in April 1926, a proposal was put before the committee to widen the access road for charabancs, to Symonds Yat.¹⁴ However, Colonel Luttey said, "the road leads nowhere else as far as I can see but to the pub" (laughter). The committee decided

that the hotels situated at the end of the road should pay for any improvement. In 1921 the government introduced major support grants for the road programmes of the county councils. The Road Traffic Act, 1921 supplemented the county revenues with grants of sixty per cent and forty per cent respectively for main and secondary class roads and was a major source of additional source of funds. The County Surveyor however sought, throughout his term of office, other local methods of raising additional finance. These included charging a mileage rate of three pence for omnibus operators. The committee agreed to this proposal. However when presented with a particular case, for example Mr Bird who wished to start operating omnibuses from Wigmore and for whom the mileage rate would be a significant burden, they relented.

Another suggestion was for a road frontage tax for petrol stations.¹⁵ The committee report of the 14 April 1923 noted that petrol pumps could be erected in the highway but would be charged an annual rental of ten shillings, but if requested by the committee they were to be removed. However, later that year at the meeting of the 13 October the committee were informed that the Ministry of Transport had issued a circular (No 191 Roads – 25 August 1923) stating that no rental could be charged.¹⁶ The committee consequently decided to grant no more such licences and requested that all existing licences, which had been granted, be withdrawn. The committee however in 1929 were still experiencing problems with petrol pump owners who allowed their patrons to illegally use the highway verge for parking their vehicles. Jack continued his search for alternative funding. An item was reported to committee in 1927 concerning the damage sustained by bridge structures as a result of vehicular road accidents.¹⁷ Two bridges were concerned, one at Monmouth Cap and the other at Kingsland. The cost of repairs had been met by the errant driver of the vehicle in each case. In the June quarterly report of 1928 Jack informed his committee that following discussions he had had with the AA he had arranged for them to assist financially in the improvement of dangerous bends within the network albeit the sums involved in each case would not be greater than £50.¹⁸ Jack's report to committee of January 1930 makes mention of another call upon the finances of his department.¹⁹ It was a request by Whitchurch local council seeking redress for property damaged, so they claimed, as a result of vibration

created by the passage of high-speed vehicles passing through the village. The committee, however let this request lie upon the table.

The County Surveyor's April 1920 quarterly report included a table which indicated the sum of money assigned to each facet of his work programme:

Table 3.5 Itemised Highway Department Quarterly Costs for 10/4/20²⁰

Item	Value	
Main road estimate and miscellaneous	£16,634	17s 6d
Maintenance of Road Board(Ministry) highways	£ 3,578	5s 7d
Bridges and approaches	£ 250	17s 1d
Surveyor's travelling expenses, printing etc	£ 175	10s 6d
Sundries	£ 2	14s 10d
Total	£ 20642	5s 6d

It is interesting to note again the level of detail offered to the members which reflected the detail offered in the description of length mentioned above. In this case also by the mid-1920s a more rational approach was taken. It can be seen that the largest proportion of the monies some eighty one per cent was taken by the work associated with the main roads. However, with the additional finance of the 1921 Act the County Council was able to remove more speedily the effects of neglect of road maintenance which had occurred during the Great War. The quarterly reports for 1921 and 1922 of the County Surveyor gave details of the apportionments of the total County Council income, and show the changing priorities of the county council towards the road network and the effect of the 1921 Act grants to the Council.

Table 3.6 Roads quarterly income from county budget 1921-22

Date	County Council Income	Roads Apportionment	% of total CC income
09-06-21	£153094	£98391	64
21-09-21	£ 99250	£ 59760	60
21-12-21	£115034	£59893	52
22-03-22	£ 60773	£ 20050	33
22-09-22	£ 66087	£ 29820	45
22-12-22	£ 84474	£ 26165	31

Jack's quarterly report for September 1923 noted that:

During the year under review the roads have been managed in such a way as to keep within an expenditure fixed by the County Council, and I am glad to say that in spite of that figure being £30,000 below my Estimate I have succeeded in preventing any over-spending.

But he warned his committee that:

All those roads which suffered by the reduction are now in a much weaker condition, and will be more costly to reinstate. It was gratifying in a way, to know that the public confirmed the accuracy of my Estimate by formally complaining as to the state of these particular roads, and I am glad to be able to say that, on my pointing out the cause, the inconvenience seems to have been borne without further comment. It will be impossible to continue to maintain our County Roads at such a low figure for the reason that as time goes on the inefficiency and wastefulness of providing untreated water-bound surfaces where there is moderate motor traffic becomes more and more evident.

Jack repeated again his concern at the weakness of the water bound stone carriageway to carry the volume and weight of motor vehicles that were using the county's road network in the early 1920s. The cost of the constant necessary repair work increased year on year which if not carried out would lead to road closures, a consequence that he would strongly resist.

The County Councils Association, in 1931 tabulated figures for the previous seven years of the gross expenditure of the West Midland Highway departments. This enables a comparison to be made between Herefordshire with its neighbouring counties. An extract is shown below:

Table 3.7 Gross expenditure for highways departments in Herefordshire and neighbouring counties for 1923/24 and 1929/30²¹

	1923/24	1929/30	% increase
Breconshire	51,000	57,000	12
Gloucestershire	327,000	466,000	43
Herefordshire	147,000	208,000	42
Monmouthshire	204,000	144,000	-34
Radnorshire	21,000	35,000	67
Shropshire	248,000	369,000	49
Worcestershire	260,000	286,000	10

It can be seen that the increased expenditure in Herefordshire over the seven years is significant and compares with the wealthier counties of both Gloucestershire and Shropshire. The small Welsh counties of Breconshire and Radnorshire were able to be more flexible in their approach, while both Monmouthshire and Worcestershire having concentrated in improving their road network after the war, relaxed their approach by the end of the decade. Breconshire and Radnorshire, together with Herefordshire, were amongst the twenty counties, mentioned below, who petitioned the Minister for additional funds to implement a five-year plan.

The County Surveyor's report to committee in 1938 covered the financial changes of the previous three years. They indicate the level of government grant of approximately sixty five per cent. He pointed out to the committee that the receipts from the County Rate fell in each succeeding year as shown in the following table:

***Table 3.8 Gross Expenditure and Receipts for the years
1935/36 to 1937/38***²²

	1935-36	1936-37	1937-38
Gross Expenditure	£238031 8 9	£237264 19 3½	£231156 11 5
Receipts (County Rate)	£82940 6 8	£82135 8 0	£78764 17 6

The receipts from the County Rate fell by five and a quarter per cent over the three years largely as a result of the drop of twelve per cent in the average maintenance per mile of Class B roads. A fall of one and three quarter per cent was also seen in the gross expenditure. Gurney also produced figures illustrating changes in cost per mile for the various classes of road. These are shown in the table below:

Table 3.9 The average cost per mile for each class of road 1935/36 to 1937/38²²

	1935-36	1936-37	1937-38
Class "A" Roads	£264.1	£257.1	£261.42
Class "B" Roads	£187.9	£181.4	£165.43
Unclassified	£65.1	£65.1	£69.49

He had managed to reduce the costs for Class “A” and “B” roads. However the costs for unclassified roads had risen by seven per cent. They made up about seventy five per cent of the total length of maintained highway within the county. Their maintenance and improvement were an issue to be approached with caution. The picture offered by these figures suggests careful housekeeping whilst adopting a minimal approach with the accent on maintenance and small improvements.

The Ministry by the mid 1930s had established the principle of forward planning in the form of five year plans for each county. A forward plan for road improvements to be realistic should be supported by adequate financial cover. The ability of Herefordshire to support a realistic five year plan was problematic. The County Clerk encouraged a group of counties in a similar position as themselves in which the product of a one penny rate per mile of maintained county road was under thirty shillings to petition the Minister, Leslie Hore-Belisha, for additional grants.²² The twenty counties concerned were – Cardigan, Merioneth, Anglesey, Rutland, Cornwall, Huntingdon, Westmorland, Montgomery, Radnor, Camarthen, Lincoln-Kesteven, Salop, Cumberland, Lincoln-Lindsey, Pembroke, Brecon, Lincoln-Holland, Hereford, West Suffolk and Yorkshire-East Riding. They confirmed to the Minister that their proposals related only to the schemes under the proposed five year programme of road improvement works.

The Counties wished the Minister to agree that the salaries of the additional technical officers, clerks of work, inspectors and foremen should form part of the grant. The unsurprising outcome of this petition was that the Minister felt unable to increase his grant to any of the counties concerned indicating that in the 1930s there was little available finance in the country as a whole for road works other than maintenance and small improvements. The County Surveyor put before his committee a report in October 1936 which set out his works programme for the next five years using the funds that were available to him.²³ He included an addendum covering the work that could be attempted if the Ministry were more generous. The committee made no comment on his report.

The County Council in 1939 felt it was necessary to consider measures for the coming conflict.²⁴ The Air Raid Precautions Committee of 29 February 1939

discussed the distribution of respirators, establishment of first aid posts, the digging of trenches, erection of shelters, the organisation of Wardens and the erection of warning sirens. All these suggestions had a detrimental effect upon the finances and activities of the other committees of the County Council. Herefordshire was not a wealthy county neither did the vehicular use of its road network equal that of more prosperous counties. Thus on both sources of revenue, the local rates and ministerial grants the county did not prosper, the work output of the highway department was limited as a result.

The Highways Department 1919-1939

The highway department was created in 1907 with one member – the County Surveyor – Jack, who also acted as the County Architect. In 1920 the department had increased to fifteen in number and in 1927 a separate Architect's department with its own chief officer was created. In 1939 the number of staff had increased to twenty nine with a number of chartered engineers on the staff. Their salaries accounted for approximately four per cent of the annual gross expenditure of the department and thus had little effect upon the total expenditure of the department. Their expertise had had to increase from the relatively simple task of laying a water bound stone road structure to the differing attributes of the available road surface solutions in the 1930s which ranged, as mentioned above, from water bound granite tarred, through asphaltic slag to tar grouted granite.

At the end of the First World War, other industries in Herefordshire - the timber trade, agriculture and the service sector, offered better wages than the County Surveyor. His senior staff were also tempted by the higher salaries in the neighbouring more affluent eastern counties, up to £450 a year for a chartered senior engineer, compared with the £275 offered by Herefordshire. It was a year before the Roads and Bridges Committee would agree to any increases in wages and income for the department.²⁵ In April 1920 they agreed to combat this imbalance by increasing the workman's wage from twenty nine shillings to thirty six shillings and six pence a week with the weekly wage of a driver of a steamroller to fifty five shillings and a tractor driver to three pounds. They also agreed to

review the salaries of the senior staff. The question of piecework was investigated in the mid 1920s but not pursued. The county road network had suffered during the war years through lack of funds and more particularly as a result of timber and stone being exported from the Wigmore area and Clee Hill for the war effort. The heavy transport lorries had severely damaged the approach roads. Jack, however, was able to inform his committee, with a degree of satisfaction, that ‘during the recent difficulties,’ whilst ruts and potholes proliferated, he was not forced to close any road to traffic – by reason of disrepair.

The quarterly reports presented to the Roads and Bridges Committee by Jack itemised the work that had been completed in the previous quarter. These reports allow a picture of his success between 1920 and 1927 to be assembled and show his enthusiasm in the early 1920s for filling potholes.

Table 3.10 Works completed by the Highways Department 1920-27

Item	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
			(ii)		(iii)			(iv)
Dangerous bends	1	1		14	24	38	11	1
Flooding and culverts		2		2		2		
Bridge strengthening etc	15	15		19	3	10	3	
Tar and bitumen surfacing (miles)	30	48		31		82		
Fencing		1						
Direction signs		4		14	2	12	12	7
Stoning tar-sprayed roads (miles)				169				24
Road improvements	3(i)	2		2		9	5	1
Drainage outfall					1			
Potholes	>2000(v)							
Trimming verges	1							

- Notes (i) Two of the improvements were in the city of Hereford
(ii) No records were available for 1922
(iii) The first quarterly report only was available for 1924
(iv) The second and third quarterly reports only were available for 1927
(v) The quarterly report of 19th June 1920 made particular mention of many thousands” of potholes filled in the previous quarter.

It can be seen that improvements to the county road network in the years immediately after the First World War centred around basic remedial work - the removal of potholes and a start on the strengthening of the many bridges in the county. The figures in the table represent those items which received committee

approval rather than those considered necessary by the County Surveyor. The former were often less than the latter. An example occurred in the last quarter of 1923 the County Surveyor considered that forty one dangerous bends should be improved, but the committee only approved thirteen. Similarly, in the second quarter of 1927, the County Surveyor had requested that one hundred and seventy miles of tar sprayed surfacing be stoned which the committee reduced to twenty four miles. It can also be seen from the table that the committee in the latter half of the 1920s were able to concentrate upon a more widespread range of improvements to the road network. They increased, for example, the number of direction signs which would have assisted the tourist trade. The lengths of roadway which were coated with tar and bitumen surfacing in the years 1921 and 1923 were assisted by a fall in both the cost of materials and labour. The year 1922 (17 June) saw the first occasion of a request for a telephone box, or as it was described then a telephone 'hut -the size of a sentry box' to be erected one mile north of St Owens Cross in Hereford.²⁶ The committee granted this request. At the committee meeting some six years later (17 March 1928) it was reported that the AA wanted to erect nine telephone boxes in the highway, a request which was also granted.²⁷ Four years later (14 May 1932) the committee had decided that the boxes constituted an obstruction in the highway and were not impressed when the Postmaster General offered to indemnify the structures.²⁸ The committee of the 20 June 1925 noted that iron fences had replaced hedges at sixty three locations as a boundary to the highway at a bend in the alignment thus improving the availability of forward vision for drivers.²⁹ Frontagers in the 1920s in the rural areas of the county were accustomed to trim hedges and maintain roadside ditches and thus improve forward visibility and combat the flooding of the carriageway. However, by the 1930s (report 9 August 1930) this had ceased to be the norm which increased the workload of the department.³⁰ The committee suggested that the government to be approached for assistance.

The committee reports of the mid 1920s noted a wider public interest in highway safety. The September 1926 quarterly meeting brought a request from the public for more white guidance lines on the road surface.³¹ However, the committee agreed with the County Surveyor that the application of white lines should await improvements in the road surfacing. The lines lasted only a matter of weeks on a

water bound surface. He pointed out the inconsistency of concentrating on the improvement of a particular bend on a particular road to satisfy a local concern when the large majority of all the Herefordshire roads could be similarly improved but at a cost. He took care to warn his committee of the expected increases in the number and weight of motor vehicles in the coming decades. The 1930s saw a continued public interest in highway matters. In the June 1934 committee, for example, it was reported that a Mr Benn of Lyonshall wanted to erect a horse trough in the highway in the village, permission was granted at the October meeting of the committee.³² This item illustrates the rural character of the county and the kindly attitude of the committee to such non-highway requests. At the same June meeting a request was submitted for white lines in Church Street in Bromyard to locate parking bays away from a bend in the road. The maintenance periods of white lines had by the 1930s increased due to improvement in the lining material and the strength of the road surface. This request was also considered and accepted. Mr Austin of Evendine Lane in Colwall wanted a sign erected in the Lane warning drivers that the lane was 'closed' to 'through' traffic due to the narrowness of the carriageway. The Chief Constable also commented on this proposal and considered it to be impractical to enforce. The committee noted the Chief Constable's comments and further noted that many of the roads in the county were as narrow and rejected the proposal as impracticable. A request was submitted to the July 1934 committee meeting concerning the need for tarred footpaths in Kings Acre Road in Hereford city.³³ This request did receive committee support and was included in the works programme of the Highways Department.

O'Connell notes that the Society for checking the Abuses of Advertising was founded in the early years of motoring in 1893 by a largely middle-class pressure group to preserve the English landscape.³⁴ Another society, formed later in 1928, the Roads Beautifying Association which published guidelines on tree planting on main roads and abhorred the increasing use of wires and supporting poles in the highways. These questions increasingly engaged Jack's attention in the 1920s. His report to committee, of July 1924, mentioned four such signs, which in his opinion, impinged upon the beauty of the countryside rather than constituting a threat to vehicle safety by distraction or location. Jack indicated to the committee that there had been a:

great increase of late in this County of glaring and ugly advertisements upon most of the main roads, and especially the part most frequented by tourists. There is no excuse for two or three signs at one spot indicating that several sorts of petrol may be obtained. If signs there must be, one much less obtrusive in character would serve the purpose equally well.³⁴

He had approached the owners of four of the signs - Shell Mex, Messrs Pratts, Michelin and Dunlop and the AA. Three had agreed to move their signs, however, the fourth, the AA had refused. Jack was also concerned by the mass of wires and poles erected in the county in the highway verge. He considered that:

the majority of main roads traverse exceptionally beautiful country, and are already disfigured by gaunt and ugly telegraph, telephone and cable poles, which must be suffered because of their utility. Nevertheless, there will come a day when these will not be tolerated and the wires will be put under ground, where they ought to be. I trust the Council will lose no time in making bylaws which will help in the preservation of one of Herefordshire's chief assets - its natural beauty.

Jack's reign came to an end in 1933 when after twenty five years as head of the department he was succeeded by his deputy Gurney.³⁵ Jack's last report to committee in March 1933 mentioned his sorrow at leaving the council's service and his loyal and competent staff. He did note that he had established that, once the surface of a road was made smooth, thin surface repairs of a bitumen mix of three quarter inch aggregate were both longer lasting and cheaper than the old water bound method.

Gurney had made his mark by the end of his first year in office by proposing that unclassified roads which did not receive any Ministry grant, should have a minimum carriageway width of thirteen feet.³⁵ He presented figures to his committee which showed that this proposal was within the county's financial budget. His fifth annual report of the 1 October 1938 included a summary of the materials used by his department in the previous three years and a note on the types of surface dressing used.³⁶ The quantities of tarred and bituminous macadam used had increased by twelve per cent in 1936/37 and by three per cent in 1937/38. He also noted that in the previous year forty eight direction signs, ninety five motor signs and seventeen approach signs had been erected. Bridges had also received attention, during the year every bridge in the county had been inspected by a

member of his staff, a report compiled and repairs carried out on sixty nine of them. The concern of the public throughout the country in the mid 1930s over the increasing number of motor vehicle road accidents sometimes lead to disagreements between the committee and their County Surveyor as to the most appropriate solution to an accident black spot. An example arose in April 1937 at Chances Pitch, Colwall.³⁷ The previous meeting of the committee had instructed the Chairman and The County Surveyor to inspect the steep hill and road junction between the A 4103 and A 449 at Chances Pitch. The junction had been the site of a number of accidents and was the object of committee concern. The primary cause of the accidents appeared to be the excessive speed of some vehicles down the hill. In consequence some vehicles ran over the bank into the field below. Work had been undertaken some years before at the site which included erecting a warning notice for heavy vehicles at the top of the hill and the super elevation of the carriageway. More of the latter work had recently been completed. These measures of themselves were not efficacious due to limited visibility at the junction and 'a hump at the road junction' which obstructed the vertical view. Gurney suggested that the straightening of the road would both reduce the approach gradient and render the junction flat and thus largely remove the cause of the accidents. But he had had to contend with a committee who, through acquaintance with highway affairs, considered they were more knowledgeable than their surveyor. Gurney was able, however, eventually to persuade the members to support his solution. At the same meeting it was reported that a slip had occurred at Coppett Hill, Welsh Bicknor. The hedge and a portion of the road had given way and dropped into a garden. The building of a dry stone wall was put in hand immediately at a probable cost of fifty pounds. The committee approved this action.

The work undertaken by Gurney up to the Second World War was of a minor nature. Indeed Alford has noted that after 1930 new main road construction in the country as a whole virtually came to an end.³⁸ The major work that was accomplished in the 1930s on trunk roads in the country as a whole was designed and supervised by the Ministry – a procedure that ensured that a uniform approach was presented to the driver, particularly at a time when the finer points of both

design and construction were still being evolved. However the Committee felt strongly that all design and supervision including that which concerned the two trunk roads in the county the A40 and A49 should be carried out by the County Surveyor's department, their plea however, went unheeded by the Ministry. The committee for example were informed in October 1936 that the Ministry were considering an improvement to Blue School Street to form an inner ring road to the city of Hereford at a cost in the region of £80,000.²³ This proposal eventually came to fruition some thirty years later.

The committee was unable, due to lack of funds, to install expensive pedestrian crossings in Hereford city as suggested by the Minister in 1930. They did, however, accept the introduction of a thirty mph speed limit in built up areas which could be brought into force under the Road Traffic Act 1934. In 1935 Pembridge, Eardisland, Adforton, Brimfield, Fawnhope and Tarrington all located on main roads requested that a speed limit of thirty mph should be installed in their village. The question of what constituted a built up area allowed the committee freedom of selection. All these requests were refused by the committee who felt the proposals unnecessary. The installation of thirty mph speed limits in villages, of course, relied heavily upon the views of the Chief Constable as to their enforceability. Another factor was the alignment of the carriageway within the village envelope which, in some cases was such as to create a self-enforcing speed limit. In April 1936 the committee did agree to the imposition of a thirty mph speed limit in the village of Leintwardine in the north of the county on the main A4113 road leading to central Wales.³⁹ By the end of that year the committee allowed a further two speed impositions at Pontrilas and Peterchurch.

The Ministry had by the mid 1930s established the principle of forward planning, as mentioned above, for the road network in the country as a whole. A band of interest could be established under the Ribbon Development Act of 1933 to protect the line of the bypass so that construction could be commenced when necessary and financially feasible. The first county five year programme for Herefordshire prepared by the County Surveyor in 1935 included a proposal for a bypass for the village of Lea on the A40 some seven miles east of Ross.⁴⁰ The

proposal met with the opposition of local landowners and thus would have necessitated the imposition of a compulsory purchase order to secure the line of the new road. The Committee also expressed strong reservations about the whole proposal and suggested improvements to the existing road where necessary. The Ministry of Transport's divisional road engineer in Birmingham, Michell, was reluctant to sanction palliative measures in the absence of securing the principle of the new alignment. He wrote to the County Surveyor (17 January 1936) deploring their 'disjointed and piecemeal proposals' in the absence of the completion of the bypass within the five year programme. The County Surveyor had suggested a narrower band of interest than that recommended by the Ministry should the line be imposed. Michell, however, reminded the committee of his views thus:

I think I told you that in view of the importance of this Class A road, my Headquarters would be reluctant to accept a width of only forty feet, especially since the passing of the Restriction of the Ribbon Development Act, where the minimum standard width is set down as sixty feet. In fact I have recently had recommendations for widenings to fifty feet sent back to me.⁴¹

The committee of necessity accepted this solution. The compulsory purchase order was made but the intervention of the Second World War absolved the committee from any action.

Conclusion

Road improvements in the inter-war years in the United Kingdom were the subject of much discussion in both the public and governmental domain. The realisation that the volume and weight of road vehicles would significantly increase in the coming decade even in rural counties such as Herefordshire was only grasped by the public at large in the latter years of the 1920s. The question of what constituted an acceptable type of construction for the road surface was a subject that was still debated in the 1930s. The solution to the problem of finding the most suitable road surfacing material also revolved about the question of finance. Bitumen coated stone laid to a minimum depth of seventy five millimetres was agreed to be best but expensive. Suggestions were put forward in favour of wood blocks or rubber. Neither of these two ideas were progressed. The industry tended

to be inconsistent in the materials they used in manufacture. Efforts were made by the County Surveyors Society to counter this failing. The solution to the problem of improvements in road realignment were more self evident.

The ability to implement the proposals relied upon a suitable financial base. This was the problem which coloured much of the thinking of the County Surveyor in that period. The Herefordshire Roads and Bridges Committee in the early 1920s was reduced to seeking alternative sources of finance. They considered a mileage tax on the increasing number of omnibus companies and a road frontage tax on the emergent petrol filling stations. Neither of these two proposals found support from the Ministry which in 1921, through the medium of a road licence, supplemented, by means of a road grant. Herefordshire was among the group of twenty 'poorer' counties who pleaded their case for additional grants for the implementation of the five year forward planning proposals required in the 1930s by the Ministry. The Minister for Transport at the time, Leslie Hore-Belisha, however, did not feel able to assist them in any way.

The road network throughout Herefordshire after the First World War was in need of immediate attention. The workload of the County Surveyor's department for the whole period was able only be concerned with maintenance and small improvements works. This level of workload was accepted on behalf of the public by the County Council Committee members. No record was found of committee or press disapproval of the County Surveyor's efforts towards improving the safety of the county road network. It was a generally acknowledged fact that more finance would have resulted in more improvements and greater road safety, however money was limited. The enthusiasm of Jack resulted in 1923 in a number of experimental lengths using differing solutions to the road surface, one of which bitumen coated stone became the universally accepted best solution in the 1930s. Central government throughout the period through the medium of the award of grants took upon itself design and supervision of the major improvements to the country's main road network. However, in Herefordshire there was no work of this description. It is interesting to note Jack's dislike of both roadside advertisements and poles in the highway with their attendant wires. It was not the distraction of the former or the obstruction of the latter to vehicle drivers which concerned him, his principal

concern was the fact that both spoiled the 'natural beauty of the rural scenery' with which he considered that Herefordshire was abundantly gifted.

The next chapter will consider the efforts of the local police force to enforce traffic legislation in the county. This subject has been the focus of much academic study. The HRO hold a large number of records and relevant committee minutes which provide a secure basis for discussion.

Notes

1. Proceedings of the Institution of Municipal and County Engineer's meeting 26 Jan 1929, (843) Institution of Civil Engineer Library. Bitumen is a term applied generally to minerals of vegetable origin consisting of complex hydrocarbons. They comprise many species, ranging from natural gas, through petroleum and asphalts, to the softer varieties of coal - Concise Oxford Dictionary OUP (1964) 121
2. HRO T59/8 20/11/37
3. Illness prevented Jack from being present at the meeting of the 28th April 1928. The committee sent him their best wishes and requested that this should be recorded in the minutes. HRO4 T59/8 28/4/1928
4. HRO T59/8 15/10/36
5. HRO T59/4 17/9/1921
6. HRO T59/4 Annual Report, September 1923
7. HRO T59/4 19/6/1926
8. HRO T59/4 20/7/1927
9. HRO T59/5 11/10/30 MOT memorandum 336 (Roads)
10. P Bagwell and P Lyth, *Transport in Britain*, 89
11. HRO T59/9 20/4/1939
12. HRO AW13
13. HRO T59/4 13/4/1918 Quarterly Report
14. HRO T59/4 4/1926
15. HRO T59/4 14/4/1923
16. HRO Annual Report September 1923, 6/T59/4
17. HRO T59/4 17/12/1927

18. HRO T59/4 June 1928 Quarterly Report
19. HRO T59/5 11/1/1930
20. HRO Quarterly Report April 1920
21. HRO Quarterly Report April 1931
22. HRO T59/9 13/4/1938
23. HRO 15/10/1936
24. HRO April 1939
25. HRO T59/4 April 1920
26. HRO T59/4 17/6/1922
27. HRO T59/4 17/3/1928
28. HRO T59/6 14/5/1932
29. HRO T59/4 20/6/1925
30. HRO T59/5 9/8/1930
31. HRO T59/4 Quarterly Report September 1926
32. HRO T59/7 June 1934
33. HRO T59/7 July 1934
34. HRO T59/4 July 1924, and O'Connell. 152.
35. HRO T59/6 March 1933
36. HRO T59/9 1/10/1938
37. HRO T59/8 April 1937
38. BWE Alford *Depression and Recovery* Macmillan (1972).70.
39. HRO T59/7 April 1936
40. HRO T59/7 April 1935
41. HRO T59/7 17/4/1936

CHAPTER 4 – POLICING ROAD TRAFFIC IN HEREFORDSHIRE 1919 - 1939

Introduction

The fourth chapter looks at the work of the police force in Herefordshire which was essentially reactive in character. There is a significant quantity of historical research, not all adulatory, upon the subject of police forces in England and Wales during the inter-war years. The introduction has mentioned that Perkin, Plowden, O'Connell, Davis, Critchley, Emsley, Howard Taylor and Foreman Peck all have contributed usefully. The Road Traffic Act 1930 considered in detail in this chapter, rationalised the legal approach to traffic safety. It provided a schedule of road traffic offences and appropriate penalties. The schedule put great emphasis on combating drunken driving by suggesting heavy penalties for that particular offence. It emphasised the use of courtesy by all road users and contained a code for highway behaviour. The Act and the subsequent Act of 1934 provided the police throughout the country with a consistent basis for the application of traffic legislation. Howard Taylor however argues that large variations existed, in the attitudes taken by both the magistrates and the force.¹ The large number of court records and committee reports kept in the HRO enable a picture to be created of the volume of work relating to traffic matters faced by the police forces in Herefordshire in the inter-war years, both the County police force and the separate organisation the City police force.² They enable a comparison to be made between rural and urban traffic related misdemeanours. The local press was provided and made use of much copy from these cases. The Hereford City Council Watch Committee records also reveal other relevant road traffic aspects of the work of the force. The proliferation of bus operators in the 1920s in Herefordshire encouraged the Chief Constable to introduce safety regulations regarding their operation. Traffic congestion began to be a problem in Hereford city in the 1920s. The Chief Constable sought to solve this problem with the provision of vehicle parking areas as well as offering comments on traffic safety measures suggested by the public. The chapter will then look at the organisation of the police forces in Herefordshire, including the role of the constable, and their effectiveness in their reactive enforcement of highway legislation. The records in the HRO illustrate the result of the court cases conducted in Herefordshire by the police force. With the comments

of Howard Taylor in mind the answer to the question ‘how effective were the police forces in Herefordshire in keeping the county road network safe?’ becomes one of degree. The force certainly reacted to national public concern in the mid 1930s at the rising number of road accidents but there is little evidence that their subsequent more relaxed efforts were not accepted by the public. The force noted that the number of fatal accidents which were recorded as occurring in the county in the 1930s did not increase even though there was an increase in the use by motor vehicles of the county road network.³ The new mode of transport involved everyone in a learning curve, the public, the highway engineers and the police. The police forces in the country as a whole in their task of teaching the motorist to drive with care had colleagues – The Automobile Association (AA) and the National Safety First Association (NSFA). The AA had been founded in the early days in 1903 and was a powerful voice in the national scene. The NSFA, was founded later in 1916 and was also a powerful national voice. It took the mantle of encouraging the safety consciousness of the drivers of motor vehicles. The NSFA approached the Hereford City Council in 1929 with a view to staging a ‘Safety First Week’ in the city. However, the members did not respond to the approach. But from the mid 1930s the committee modified their views. They supported a NSFA week in June 1935 with a contribution of one guinea this being the cost of the publicity posters. Two years later a Safety First committee was created by the City Council. The committee held annual road safety exhibitions and school classes.

Policing the Roads – The Road Traffic Act 1930

The Road Traffic Act 1930 brought a guiding hand to the question of traffic legislation. The 1929 Royal Commission formed the basis of the Act. It urged the government to introduce "prohibitive legislation" against dangerous driving. A complete text of the Act with explanatory notes was published in 1931 and edited by Llewellyn-Jones who was a solicitor, a coroner and the Member of Parliament for the county of Flint.⁴ It had been suggested to Llewellyn-Jones that it would be very useful if he wrote a short work on the Act for the benefit of the legal profession, the officers of local authorities and members of the general public. Llewellyn-Jones explained the background of the Act and noted that:

While the Act contains a number of sections which are merely re-enactments with more or less important amendments of the old law, there are at the same time many important provisions which are absolutely new and which are largely based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Transport. I might draw special attention to the following:-

In Part 1 of the Act:-

- (1) The provisions as to the issuing of drivers' licences;
- (2) The increase of penalties for driving offences;
- (3) Section 15, which deals with the offence of driving a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicating drink or drugs;
- (4) Section 19, providing for the limitation of the hours of employment of the drivers of certain vehicles.

Part II of the Act, which contains the legislative requirements for compulsory insurance against Third Party Risks.

In Part III the provision for the issue of the Highway Code

Part IV which deals with the licensing and control of the various types of Public Service Motor Vehicles.

He summed up the hopes of the public for a more ordered road network thus:

Although the Road Traffic Act is not a consolidating enactment of all the law relating to the highway, the Minister of Transport was certainly justified in his claim that it is a legislative milestone and that it constitutes a great charter for the ordered use of the King's highway.

The learning curve, mentioned above, also included the judgements of local magistrates which varied across the country and county. To bring a sense of order in sentencing the Act put forward suggested penalties for various offences. It will be noted that subsequent convictions for reckless or dangerous driving were heavily punished. All possible offences were noted at length in the Act. However in the interests of brevity only the principle misdemeanours relating to the driving of a motor vehicle are listed below:

No of section	Offence	Penalty
10(1)	Exceeding speed limit	First conviction >£20 Second or subsequent >£50
10(5)	Aiding or abetting person to exceed speed limit	First Conviction £50 Subsequent convictions £100 or/and three months
11	Driver guilt of reckless or dangerous driving	First conviction £50 or four months Subsequent convictions £100 or/and four months
12	Driver guilty of careless driving	as 10(1) above
13	Promoting or taking part in motor racing or speed trials on highway	Three months or/and £50
22	Driver of motor vehicle failing to give his name and address after being	

	involved in accident resulting in damage or injury to any person, vehicle or animal or otherwise failing to report to police within twenty-four hours after accident	as 10(1) above
23(2)	Obstructing person authorised by Minister to inspect vehicle involved in accident	as 10(1) above
28(1)	Taking and driving away motor vehicle without owner's consent or other lawful authority	as 10(1) above"

The government was keen to combat dangerous driving to reduce the number of road accidents by the imposition of heavy fines for such offences. The schedule above contained some onerous fines. Such large fines could have been ameliorated by local magistrates and Howard Taylor certainly believes this to have been the case. The powerful motor lobby was not keen to ascribe guilt to the driver of the vehicle. The existing speed limits that had been in force since before the First World War were increasingly ignored by both the public and their enforcement by the police force. A new approach was clearly required. Speed limits were referred to in sections 10 and 12.1 of the Act and were listed under the First Schedule, and are shown below:

LIMITS OF SPEED		
Class of Vehicle		Maximum Speed – Miles per hour
1. <i>Passenger Vehicles</i> , that is to say vehicles constructed for the carriage of passengers and their effects		
(1) If all wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres and the vehicle is not drawing a trailer:-		
(a) if the vehicle is adapted to carry not more than seven passengers, exclusive of the driver and is not a heavy motor car or an invalid carriage		No Limit
(b) if the vehicle is a heavy motor car or is adapted to carry more than seven passengers exclusive of the driver		30
(c) in any other case, including invalid carriages		20
2. <i>Goods Vehicles</i> , that is to say vehicles constructed or adapted for use for the conveyance of goods or burden of any description		
(1) When not drawing a trailer		
(a) Motor cars (a), if all the wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres: and		
(b) heavy motor cars, constructed or adapted for the conveyance of horses and their attendants and used solely for that purpose, if all wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres		30
(c) (i) Motor cars, if all wheels are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but		

are fitted with soft or elastic tyres; and	
(ii) Heavy motor cars, if all wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres	20
(d) Heavy motor cars, if all tyres are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but are fitted with soft or elastic tyres	16
(2) When drawing a trailer	
(a) if all wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are fitted with pneumatic tyres, or if the trailer is attached to the drawing vehicle by partial superimposition in such a manner as to cause a substantial part of the weight to be borne by the vehicle and all the wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are fitted with soft or elastic tyres	16
(b) if all the wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but are fitted with soft or elastic tyres.	8
(3) in any other case	5
3. <i>Locomotive and Motor Tractors:-</i>	
(1) Heavy Locomotives	
(a) within any city, town or village	3
(b) elsewhere	5

The most dramatic suggestion was that for passenger vehicles if all the wheels were fitted with pneumatic tyres, not drawing a trailer and not carrying more than seven passengers exclusive of the driver no limit of speed was suggested. This was amended some four years later but only in urban areas where a speed limit of 30 miles per hour was introduced.

The provision of a code of conduct was covered in Part III (p303) of the Act. The Minister Transport was directed by the Act to prepare a code of directions and guidance of road users to be known as 'The Highway Code'. The Act encouraged strict observance of the terms of code which should result in greater safety and the reduction of road accidents. This last hope, in the country as a whole, was not to be achieved. The code illuminated the extent of the learning curve which faced motorists in the 1930s. It was compiled from observations made of driver and pedestrian behaviour in the 1920s which, from the tone of the advice, must have been somewhat haphazard. The code commenced with a little general advice:

Always be careful and considerate towards others. As a responsible citizen you have a duty to the community not to endanger or impede others in their lawful use of the King's Highway.

Remember that all persons – pedestrians, cyclists, persons leading, riding or driving animals and the drivers of motor or horse-drawn vehicles – have the right to use the highway and an obligation to respect the rights of others. Good manners and consideration for others are as desirable and are as much appreciated on the road as elsewhere.

Bear in mind the difficulties of others and try not to add to them.

Keep on guard against the errors of others. **Never take a risk** in the hope or expectation that everyone else will do what is necessary to avoid the consequences of your rashness.

Take special care in bad weather and when the roads are slippery and all road users have less control over their movements.

CHILDREN

Warn children of the dangers of the road and teach them how to avoid them.

RULE OF THE ROAD

Vehicles.-Keep to the left (or near side) except when overtaking other vehicles or avoiding obstructions: when overtaking, overtake on the right (or off-side).

[This rule does not necessarily apply in places where there are special arrangements for the regulation of traffic, such as “one-way” streets, “roundabouts,” etc. In such places get into your proper line of traffic and keep in it. Subject to any local provisions to the contrary tramcars may be overtaken on either side.]

Pedestrians.-Always walk on the footpath where one is provided: if there is no footpath it is generally better to walk on the right of the carriageway so as to face oncoming traffic.

Led Animals.-It is the usual practice when leading an animal to keep to the right so as to face oncoming traffic.

The extent of the learning curve is illustrated in the advice the code offered to drivers concerning the overtaking of other vehicles – a procedure which may not have been often required in the early 1920s but was increasingly so by the end of the decade. The code had this to say on the matter:

Never overtake unless you can see sufficiently far ahead to do so with safety. Remember that the brow of a steep hill or a hump-backed bridge is as dangerous as a sharp bend because it conceals oncoming traffic.

Do not overtake at cross roads or road junctions except when there is some system of control in operation such as a “roundabout,” which makes it possible for you to do so with safety.

When you decide to overtake other traffic sound your horn unless you are satisfied that such a precaution is unnecessary.

After overtaking **go back to the left side of the road**, but not before you can do this without inconvenience to the person overtaken.

Do not cut in. Remember the right-hand side of the road belongs first to oncoming traffic. Never overtake, therefore, unless it is clear that you can pass and get back to the left side of the road again without making either the person overtaken, or a person approaching from the opposite direction, check speed or alter direction suddenly.

When being overtaken by another driver try to help and not to hinder. **Never accelerate at such a moment.** Keep well to the left and **if the road is clear** signal him on. Such a signal does not absolve the overtaking driver from the duty of satisfying himself that he can overtake with safety.

Subject to any local provisions to the contrary, tramcars may be overtaken on either side. Before you overtake a tramcar which is about to stop or is stationary, **watch carefully** to see if passengers are intending to board or alight. **Go slowly or stop** as the circumstances require.

The advice particularly the comment that ‘the right-hand side of the road belongs first to oncoming traffic’ again illustrates the point, particularly in rural areas, that drivers were accustomed to being able to use the whole width of the road in safety. The code continued with further general advice which included the use of country lanes:

Go slow in narrow country lanes however familiar the road may be to you. Blind corners, hidden drives, cattle or other obstructions may at any moment offer unexpected dangers.

Cyclists were adjured not to ride more than two abreast. The question of ‘hanging on’ was covered thus:

Do not ride close behind fast moving vehicles; leave enough space to allow for their slowing down or stopping suddenly. [It is an offence under the Road Traffic Act without lawful authority or reasonable cause to take hold of a motor vehicle for the purpose of being towed.]

One wonders at the interpretation of the phrase ‘reasonable cause’. Pedestrians were encouraged not to:

stand about in the road, especially in groups, at blind corners or other dangerous places where your presence may cause danger either of itself or by obscuring the line of vision of drivers.

Further advice was given to:

Keep your dog on the lead when walking along roads where traffic is heavy. A dog running loose in traffic is a danger to itself and everyone else.

All these exhortations exemplify the need to consider the other users of the highway. The omissions are almost as revealing as the advice given. For example a lead for a dog is only suggested in heavy traffic an unlikely occurrence on country lanes. It is unsurprising, therefore, that drivers on country lanes were advised to beware of ‘unexpected dangers’. The social aspect of securing highway safety was further emphasised in Section 5 of the regulations regarding public service vehicles. Passengers should act in an orderly manner. The item listed twenty five actions to be avoided by passengers which varied from altering their tickets to operating noisy instruments, they included the need to refrain from spitting and the use of obscene language and more surprisingly:

they should not attach to or throw or trail from the vehicle any streamer, balloon, flag or similar article in such a manner as to overhang the road.

Any passenger who contravened these regulations could be removed by the driver or conductor or by any police constable under the regulations referring to riotous behaviour. These exhortations illustrate the social problems of which could arise with the use of omnibus travel which was indulged by an increasing proportion of the public in the years between the two wars. The Minister of Transport of the time – Morrison – described the principle behind the code which was that it:

goes upon the basis that this is what the decent drivers will do, and that it is just as ungentlemanly to be discourteous or to play the fool on the King's highway as it would be for a man to push his wife off her chair at the Sunday tea table and grab two pieces of cake.

The imposition of a 30 mph speed limit for all vehicles in urban areas in the Act assisted in reducing road accidents. There were, however, those who thought that the motorist was not to blame. Lieutenant-Colonel Moore-Brabazan MP speaking in the House against the Bill to impose the speed limit said:

It is true that 7000 people are killed in motor accidents (each year), but it is not always going on like that. People are getting used to the new conditions...No doubt many of the Old Members of the House will recollect the number of chickens we killed in the old days. We used to come back with the radiator stuffed with feathers – it was the same with dogs. Dogs get out of the way of motor cars nowadays and you never kill one. There is education even in the lower animals. These things will right themselves.⁵

Moore-Brabazan had had much acquaintance with matters relating to road transport, he had been the parliamentary secretary at the Ministry of Transport from 1923-27, he was to become the Minister in 1940-41.

The Automobile Association had been formed at the beginning of the century, specifically to support the motorist. O'Connell discusses in depth the attitudes to road safety that were adopted in the inter-war years. It is, he considers:

quite possible to identify a series of powerful class interest that moulded the way in which ideas about the car, road transport and road safety developed. Increasing numbers of middle-class car owners, and the various industrial and commercial groupings that benefited from the growth of motoring, were highly influential in these developments. Middle-class motorists appreciated the

advantages the car brought to them and increasingly saw the casualties caused by motoring as the fault of a series of scapegoats – from foreign chauffeurs to careless pedestrians. Thus the concept of a new science of road safety, concentrating on the education of all road users rather than further restrictions on motorists, gained credence amongst influential sections of society. Commercial motoring interests pushed this line by financing the propaganda campaigns of the National Safety First Association (NSFA).⁵

The NSFA is regarded by many historians, as a neutral body. O'Connell, however on looking at the origins of the association, which was formed in 1916, notes that between 1931 and 1934 it was supported by a donation of £4,425 by Gordon Stewart who was the managing director of Stewart and Arden Ltd the main London Dealers for Morris Motors. The emphasis made by the NSFA was one of education but of pedestrians rather than motorists who being middle-class would, in any case, be driving in a gentlemanly manner. In support of this attitude the Chief Constable of Liverpool in 1929 was reported to have described the city's pedestrians as the worst in the world, blaming them for seventy five per cent of traffic accidents. Davis extends O'Connell's argument in his discussion on the role of ideology in motor transport. He considers that:

the ideology surrounding the hegemony of the car – is very powerful. Challenging it means not only doing hard intellectual work and distancing oneself from the ways of thinking of most of one's peer group. It also means questioning privileges that some member of society have over others. Since academics are likely to belong to the group with the privilege (car owners), they tend to lose their imperative to reveal society's unstated rules. With research funds dominated by the institutions which produce road safety ideology, this imperative is further eroded.⁶

Plowden has described the manner in which the motoring lobby was provided with drafts of bills for its perusal throughout the 1896 to 1939 period, a procedure which he considered 'a strange act of abdication'.⁷ Foreman-Peck believes that the cost of British road accidents in 1938 which was estimated at one and a quarter per cent of the gross national product, was 'deliberately downward biased'. He considers that the reaction of government was strangely muted, a function of what he believed to be:

distribution of the costs and benefits of motor vehicles among the affected population. Those affected by accidents were generally not in a position to

influence policy and those at risk...were easy to ignore. In particular, he emphasised the role of the 'powerful pro-motoring pressure groups which had an interest in avoiding constraints on motor vehicles.' In Britain the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) made no secret of its intent to answer any press article of 'an anti-motoring nature.'⁸

The support offered to the motorist provided a seamless pattern only challenged by the Pedestrian's Association whose forceful language was often dismissed as biased. The idea of the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles gained credence in the early 1930s with the rise in the number of fatal road accidents involving pedestrians. However the introduction of the (pedestrian) crossings fuelled, across the nation, public controversy about the relationships between pedestrian and motorist. One Tory MP in the Daily Telegraph claimed that:-

If the motorist dared to drive with a fraction of the carelessness and defiance, with which pedestrians sometimes walk the streets, would resemble a battlefield.⁹

Moran notes that the question of the provision of facilities to allow pedestrians to cross the road in safety arose in 1938 before a select committee of the House of Lords. A representative of the Pedestrian Association testified that:

We do feel that if subways and bridges were put into general operation it would only confirm the view of the motorist that the public highway was a motor speed track and would lead to further accidents.¹⁰

However the provision of subways or pedestrian bridges was well beyond the ability of Hereford to install in the inter-war years.

The idea that drunken driving could and had been successfully attacked with the recommended increased penalties in the 1930 Act left the cause of remaining accidents again at the door of the pedestrian and pedal cyclist. They were attributed to be the cause of the many accidents which would require an unrealistically high level of police supervision to prevent. Foreman-Peck notes that the motor vehicle being an 'individualistic form' of transport gave rise to a 'rational theory of accidents.' He stated that:

No particular accident can be predicted, but experienced drivers know what behaviour and conditions make accidents more or less probable, and act accordingly. Other things being equal, the evidence suggests that higher speed tends to increase the chances as well as the severity of an accident, but speed reduces the time spent travelling, as well as supplying intrinsic pleasures. The hypothetical rational driver, therefore, chooses his speed and accident according to his valuation of the costs he incurs in the event of an accident (including the possibility of death), his assessment of the likelihood of an accident, and other costs and benefits of speed.

The Town Clerk of Hereford City in a report of 15th September 1930 to the Watch Committee of the city commented upon the relevance of the 1930 Act to the committee with reference to the attitude of the Act towards the parking of cars in the city streets. He commented upon Section 50 of the Act in the following manner:

Section 50 makes it an offence for a person in charge of a vehicle to leave the same on a road in such a position as to be likely to cause danger to persons using the road. Presumably, this would give some power of preventing persons parking within the white lines at street corners.

The Clerk's despondent use of the words 'some power' indicates that in his opinion the local relevance of the Act depended very much on the enthusiasm of the local constabulary and the whim, of the local magistrate. It is clear that unless the public at large demanded a stricter application of the law, he considered that the current *laissez-faire* attitude would continue.

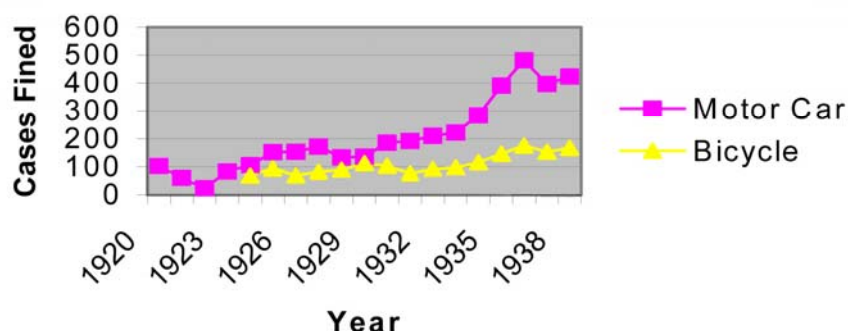
The Courts

The police force in their relationship with the public had to accommodate the public's newly acquired sense of achievement and reduced deference to authority which had not existed before the First World War. The parish constable had to consider carefully the strength of the case he proposed to bring to court under traffic legislation before apprehending a malefactor. His ability was limited in the rural areas by lack of mobility – his vehicle was often a pedal cycle. The relationship of the police force and the public relevant to traffic offences was a learning curve for both sides. The role taken by the constable needed knowledge of local affairs and particularly the use of tact. The drivers of motorcars in the 1920s

were mostly middle-class and could easily ascribe the causes of an accident to those other than themselves. Jack at the meeting of the Roads and Bridges Committee on 19th of September 1925 reported that three accident involving cars had recently occurred which were attributed by the drivers to wet roads, highway plant in the highway and an obstructive parapet.¹¹ Jack, however, put the cause, in each case, down to dangerous driving and called for a more rigorous application of the law. Another example occurred at the meeting of the Roads and Bridges Committee on 18 May 1927, which noted that pillion riding on motorcycles was becoming dangerous. A man in Ledbury had been recently seen with three pillion passengers with him on his motorcycle. The early 1930s saw coroners attributing the cause of some accidents on the inadequacy of the road layout. They mentioned three such locations at How Caple, Kington and the Barrons Cross Junction in Leominster. The County Surveyor acknowledged that the highway could be improved at these locations with the application of white lines, illuminated signs or even the construction of a bypass, however his committee was noncommittal, since in their opinion the driver should have driven with a level of care appropriate to the circumstances.

The Chief Constables of the county gave brief written quarterly reports to their Standing Joint Committees at their meetings held in the Shire Hall in Hereford. They submitted to the committee details of the cases brought to the police courts in the county concerning highway law in the previous quarter. These provide an overview of the results of court cases for the county as a whole. The HRO also has details of petty sessions in both rural and urban areas enabling a comparison to be made in the attitudes of both the driver and the magistrate over the two decades of the study period. The cases brought to the county police courts for the years 1920 to 1938 are illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 4.1 Cases brought to the County Court
1920 - 1938**



These figures can be compared with those of the national scene. O'Connell has found that for the second six months of 1928 the Home Office noted that there were a total of 114,541 convictions under highway law in England and Wales. The equivalent period in Herefordshire revealed a figure of one hundred and seven which in population per centage terms is about half the national average. This difference could reflect the rural sparsely populated nature of the county. The increases, as shown in the figure, in the number of cases brought involving motor cars in the mid 1930s may be due to the response of the courts to public opinion. The mid 1930s saw a national public concern at the rise of road accidents which involved injury or death. This concern encouraged greater police activity in apprehending malefactors. It is interesting to note that the increased police activity was not long lasting, enabling the force to avoid time consuming court appearances. The public in Herefordshire as exemplified by the county committee reports were not averse to the relaxing of police activity.

The comparison of the cases brought by the police under traffic legislation can be obtained by studying the records of the individual petty session district courts. Those chosen for study from the rural courts are from the villages of Dore and Bredwardine. Both villages were located some distance from Hereford and could thus be termed representationally rural. Each had a local distributor road running through the village which offered the possibility of conflict of interest for road space. The courts also dealt with cases from the surrounding areas as well. Dore is a village lying some two and half miles to the north west of the A465 and lies some eleven miles south west of Hereford. The B4347, runs through the village. Bredwardine is located some two miles south of the A438 and some thirteen miles from Hereford city, with the B4352 running through the village.

The records available at the HRO for Dore are for the years 1919 to 1924 and from 1932 to 1938. Whilst the middle years have not been kept, the records which do exist enable an overall picture to be gained. Tabulated below are the annual figures for the total number of cases considered, those involving the highway (h/w) have been itemised separately. Cases involving horses were negligible and have been excluded. The tabulation form of presentation has been used rather than a graphical one in order to illustrate the exact number of cases

involved. The type of vehicle involved and the misdemeanours committed have also been noted in the table:

Table 4.2 Petty Sessions at Dore 1919-1938 (non-indictable offences)^{LI5/3-5}

Year	Total no.	h/w	h/w % of total	Vehicle type				Misdemeanour	
				Motor car/lorry	Motor cycle	Pedal cycle	lights	Insurance	dangerous driving
1919	108	29	27	15	-	14	30	3	
1920	107	55	51	38	1	16	45	5	9
1921	130	32	25	24	-	8	25	6	1
1922	95	11	12	2	1	8	10	1	1
1923	117	37	32	22	2	13	15	6	18
1933	116	36	31	17	8	11	13	19	9
1934	138	38	28	17	8	13	16	1	23
1935	97	33	34	26	2	5	10	9	16
1936	126	62	61	48	5	9	14	19	31
1937	120	39	33	20	8	11	6	19	14
1938	117	38	32	26	7	5	6	15	17

The two years that show increased police activity on highway matters were 1920 and 1936. Howard Taylor notes that at the end of the First World War non-indictable offences in the country as a whole significantly reduced in number.¹² The Home Office as a result sought to reduce the size of the police forces in the country as a whole. The police management was eager to recreate itself and find new demands for its manpower. On the 1 Jan 1921, the allocation of the fines for road offences, which at that time were not very considerable, was unobtrusively transferred to the Road Fund, a central government fund held by the Exchequer. Central government, by bringing more traffic prosecutions to court had thus created a financial interest in not reducing the size of the force, Taylor has illustrated this and made reference to the calculations of Butler and Sloman. They showed, that for the country as a whole, the number of traffic offences compared to other offences for the years 1920, 1930 and 1938 were:

Table 4.3 National Traffic Offences¹²

Year	Offence (No)	
	Traffic	Other
1920	160,000	450,000
1930	260,000	340,000
1938	460,000	270,000

Whilst the volume of motor vehicles in Herefordshire continued to increase throughout the 1930s the number of highway cases brought at Dore did not follow that trend. They increased by eighty seven per cent from 1935 to 1936, but the following year they reduced by fifty nine per cent and remained at that figure for 1938. The improvements in vehicle design coincided with a reduction in prosecutions concerning missing vehicular lights. The type of vehicle involved also changed. The initial period of five years, 1919 to 1923, saw fifty nine cases which involved pedal cycles whilst the second period of six years saw only fifty four. In contrast the first period saw only four cases which involved motor cycles whilst in the second period there were thirty eight cases. The same trend, although to a lesser degree, was revealed when the motor car/lorry cases are studied. In the first five year period the average annual number was twenty cases whilst in the second six year period the average was twenty six cases. However, insufficient insurance and dangerous driving prosecutions increased in the second period. The continuing interest by the magistrates in cases involving insurance and dangerous driving reflected the Road Traffic Act 1930 which laid much stress on reducing dangerous driving and the necessity of possessing an insurance which included third party risk. This demonstrates the efforts of the court to bring the Dore motorist into line with traffic legislation – drive carefully and be properly insured.

The Bredwardine court records held by the HRO were only available from 1929 to 1939. Tabulated below are the court figures in a similar form as presented for Dore:

Table 4.4 Petty Sessions cases at Bredwardine 1929-1939^{L15/1-2}
(non-indictable offences)

Year	Total No.	h/w	% h/w of total	Vehicle type			lights	Misdemeanour	
				Motor car/lorry	Motor cycle	pedal cycle		Insurance	dangerous driving
1929	52	5	10	4	-	1	4	1	1
1930	58	9	16	3	3	3	6	1	2
1931	61	13	21	5	1	7	10	-	4
1932	50	14	28	7	-	7	11	-	4
1933	57	7	12	4	-	3	4	6	2
1934	63	12	23	5	2	5	5	3	4
1935	99	14	14	9	1	4	5	7	2
1936	75	38	51	22	-	16	12	2	24
1937	62	33	53	12	1	20	20	10	3
1938	33	11	33	9	-	2	6	1	4
1939	53	24	45	9	1	14	21	5	8

As at Dore cases involving horses have been excluded. There were, in the ten years, only six such cases. However one case, in 1933, involved the driver of the horse drawn vehicle who was prosecuted for dangerous driving because the horse had had no reins. The figures were less than at Dore but revealed the same increase in police activity in 1936, the emphasis being on dangerous driving even to the extent that two pedal cyclists were fined for dangerous riding. One cyclist was fined two pounds at the petty sessions of the 11 May in that year for being drunk in charge of his vehicle. In 1937, the police concentrated upon apprehending pedal cycles without lights and cases involving lack of insurance, two types of misdemeanour which were more easily apprehended and less time consuming. The percentage of persons who faced charges relating to motoring violations compared with the total number of charges brought in these two courts were similar, the average for those at Dore being thirty three per cent whilst in Bredwardine the average was twenty eight per cent. However there was clearly a difference in police enthusiasm in the two rural areas. At the Bredwardine court cases for dangerous driving brought in 1936 were twelve times the previous year and eight times the subsequent year. This illustrates that across the county considerable variations occurred in police activity which no doubt was reflected in the relationship of the force in that area with its public.

The records kept for the Hereford city courts are extensive and are available from 1911 to 1967. The area of interest of these courts included the villages immediately surrounding the city and lengths of the Class I roads the A465, A49, A4103 and A438 which were immediately adjacent to and served the city. In order to illustrate the extent of the changes in the cases brought to court, two periods have been chosen for comparative purposes – 1922 to 1926 and 1933 to 1936 and they are illustrated in Figure 4.5 below:

Table 4.5 Petty Session offences at Hereford City 1922-26 1933-36 ^{H38/15-42}

Year	Total No.	h/w	h/w % of total	Vehicle type				Misdemeanour		Dangerous driving
				Lights		Mechanical Fault	Dangerous driving			
				Pedal cycle	Motor vehicle			Pedal cycle	Motor vehicle	
1922	176	57	32	16	41	16		30	11	
1923	173	38	22	12	26	12	5	3	18	
1924	243	85	35	17	68	17	6	16	46	
1925	146	35	24	11	24	11		8	18	
1926	144	22	25	14	8	14		4	4	
1933	278	48	17	10	38	10		17	21	
1934	272	72	26	10	62	10	3	18	41	
1935	253	70	28	12	58	12	4	24	34	
1936	297	74	25	12	62	12	3	12	47	

The principal difference in these urban figures from those of the two rural areas mentioned above is the even tenure of police activity throughout the two decades with reference to traffic legislation. The one exception was the number of cases of dangerous driving taken to court in 1924, which could have been a question of the Force establishing a principal. The lack of additional police activity in the city in the mid 1930s, so apparent in the rural courts, is marked. The per centage of the number of cases of persons who faced charges relating to vehicular violations taken as an average over the nine years studied was twenty six per cent of the total number of cases brought to court. A change in reporting procedure is noted by Plowden. Between 1919 and 1925 the only statistics kept on fatal accidents referred to the number of accidents rather than the number of fatalities which occurred at each accident. Clive Emsley has looked at the national figures for motoring violations as a percentage of the total number of cases for the years 1930 to 1933 and has found that the figure was forty three and a quarter per cent.¹³ The local figures for both rural and urban areas of Herefordshire are less than the national average per centage figures, which suggests that the users of the road network of the county did so with care. Howard Taylor argues that there was an immense reservoir of unreported accidents which could have been used by the Force as they thought appropriate. He notes that even with fatal accidents, despite the reporting guidelines, the length of time between the accident and the death and the degree to which the accident contributed towards the death was the subject of considerable

discretion. Anomalies such as the number of cases of dangerous driving taken to the Bredwardine court in 1936 and those taken to the Hereford City court in 1924 do appear to support Howard Taylor's assertion.

Newton on being appointed as Chief Constable of both the city and county in 1929 put before the Standing Joint Committee the road accident statistics of the previous quarter for the county as a whole and an analysis of the classification of the affected person and speed limit on the length of road upon which the accident occurred. These have been used in the preparation of Tables 4.6 and 4.7 below:

Table 4.6 Traffic Accidents 1928-1938 Herefordshire, presented to committee in the last quarter of 1939

Year	Total number of accidents	Those involving death or injury	% of total	Number of persons	
				Killed	Injured
1928		180		15	216
1929		212		20	249
1930		241		18	315
1931		322		12	427
1932	710	325	46	14	445
1933	755	334	44	19	445
1934	780	365	47	20	482
1935	823	413	50	27	520
1936	794	384	48	14	504
1937	777	339	44	15	411
1938	732	345	47	20	476

Table 4.7 Traffic Accidents 1937 Herefordshire, presented to committee in 1938

Classification of Person	On roads subject to Speed Limit			On roads NOT subject to Speed Limit			Total			
	Killed	Injured		Killed	Injured		Killed	Injured		
		Seriously	Slightly		Seriously	Slightly		Seriously	Slightly	
1. Pedestrians-under 15 years of age	0	4	6	1	5	8	1	9	14	
2. Pedestrians-15 years of age and over	0	6	2	3	17	8	3	23	10	
3. Drivers of Mechanically Propelled vehicles other than Motor Cycles	0	0	1	1	19	47	1	19	48	
4. Motor Cyclists	0	3	6	3	39	48	3	42	54	
5. Pillion Passengers	0	1	3	0	11	11	0	12	14	
6. Pedal Cyclists-under 15 years of age	0	0	4	2	3	9	2	3	13	
7. Pedal Cyclists-15 years of age and over	0	1	9	0	24	32	0	25	41	
8. Other Persons		0	2	2	5	32	48	5	34	50
TOTAL		0	17	35	15	150	209	15	167	244

(this is the only record of a detailed analysis kept in the HRO)

The figures for the total number of accidents in table 4.6 for the early years 1928 to 1931 are not included perhaps because they were from the tenure of Newtown's predecessor. The years 1928 to 1938 saw large increases in both the number of accidents involving death or injury (181 per cent) and the number of persons injured (201 per cent). However the number of persons killed did not vary to the same degree and were much smaller in number - over the decade an annual average of only seventeen and a half. It can be seen that the number of deaths, twenty seven, in 1935 was the highest in this decade. The fact that the number of deaths recorded by the police resulting from a road accident over the decade did not increase and that the total number of traffic accidents from 1932 to 1938 only increased by a little over three per cent suggest that either vehicle drivers were taking care or that the local police force were adjusting the figures as suggested by Howard Taylor. The more detailed analysis for 1937 showed that those injured or killed on roads the subject of a speed limit was only fourteen per cent of those on roads not subject to a speed limit. Again, of course, the comments of Howard Taylor could apply. The Inspector of Constabulary in his annual report of 1928 deplored the time taken by the constable in visiting the scene of a traffic accident, compiling a report and its presentation at court.¹⁴ There was thus support of a significant nature to encourage Chief Constables to reduce their investigations of road accidents. These two tables form the principal basis of comment on the attitude of the Police towards traffic legislation used in this study. The Chief Constable presented these figures at his quarterly reviews with no comment apart from noting pleasure when they decreased in number. They were accepted without comment by the committee members reflecting their lack of concern. The press also generally made no comment on the chief constables figures.

The meeting of the Standing Joint Committee of the 16 Jan 1928 was presented with a letter from the town clerk of Monmouth, raising points of national concern. It noted that:

this council desires to call the serious attention of the Government to the rapid growth in the number of road accidents, caused chiefly by the ever increasing use of mechanically propelled vehicles upon the roads, and which, according to public statistics resulted, during the year 1926, in a total of 4886 deaths, and injuries to 133,888 persons throughout Great Britain, an average of nearly 400

per day, and to impress upon the Governments that urgent necessity of adopting such remedial measures as will reduce this alarming rate of casualties to a minimum

b) that copies of this resolution to be sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport, the Borough Member, the Association of Municipal Corporations and to the Councils of all Cities and County Boroughs with a request that they will support the same.

The committee no doubt thoughtful for the stretched resources of its police force, resolved to take no action. The figures quoted by the Monmouth town clerk were in line with those used by Davis. It is interesting to note that the average Davis noted was three hundred and eighty rather than 'nearly four hundred' per day, again an example of the management of figures to suit a desired result. On 15 September 1936, at the time when there was public pressure on the Force to reduce road accidents, the Chief Constable did address his Standing Joint Committee thus:

I have examined each accident report which has been submitted and although it is apparent that a large number of accidents are more or less unavoidable, or are due to the prevailing conditions, there are still the far too many which are caused by excessive speeds or by negligence on the part of one of the parties involved and which could, by the exercise of proper care have been avoided.

The comments of the Chief Constable's do not reveal any clear indication of the priorities of the Herefordshire police force in their consideration of road accidents. Again no comment from the members on his address was noted in the minutes. The local paper, the *Hereford Times* in its publication of 19 September 1936 also showed no interest.¹⁵ A year later on 16 March 1937 the Chief Constable noted that the accident figures had reduced but he attributed this to the fact that the difficult Preston cross roads in the east of the county had now been placed under the jurisdiction of the Gloucestershire Constabulary. Traffic related matters in the 1930s considered by the Chief Constable came from many directions. At a meeting on 19 June 1933 the committee agreed to a proposal from Mrs Luard to install large white circles on the road surface at the junction of Broad Street, High Street and Eign Street as a forerunner of a roundabout. The 18 September meeting of the same year noted that an accident had occurred at a bend in Holmer Road which the Chief Constable ascribed to insufficient street lighting. The committee accepted the problems inferring that the culprit was not the driver but inadequate lighting.

The Press

The press was provided with much copy in the inter-war years with regard to the early days of motoring. O'Connell suggests that the press was influenced by the motoring lobby and tended to apportion blame for accidents on pedestrians, pedal cyclists or as a final resort on a driver who was behaving in a selfish or ungentlemanly manner.¹⁶ The tales told by the press gleaned from the local court cases in the Herefordshire area could well be termed cautionary tales, warning their readership of what could happen if thoughtless attitudes were adopted. The *Leominster News* of 2 January 1920 reported two cases before the Tenbury petty sessions of cycling after dark without lights.¹⁷ The first concerned Hector Penny aged seventeen who was stopped by Inspector Smith for riding his bicycle after dark without lights although his machine had two lamps. In mitigation Mr Penny said that he did not have a match to relight the lamp which had gone out, but he was ringing his bell to give warning of his approach. The argument had little effect on Colonel R. V. V. Wheeler the Chairman of the Bench who fined Mr Penny two shillings and six pence. The fine levied upon the seventeen year old Hector Penny was a strong reminder for him to be more careful in the future. The second case occurred in the centre of Tenbury in Teme Street. The accused in this case was Arthur Clark who was abusive to PC Hodgkins and said that he had only lit the lamps some four minutes before being stopped – they must have gone out. The Bench was equally severe in this case and fined Mr Clark two shillings and six pence. The Leominster Borough Police Court before the chairman, Alderman Page, on 6 August 1920 heard a case concerning 'joyriding' by two youths in a motorcar. In this instance the whole court treated the case with levity and a caution was the only penalty. 'Joyriding' taking a vehicle without the owner's permission or without legal authority became a specific offence under the Road Traffic Act 1930. The attitude of the court indicated that to 'play' with a motorcar, in the mind of the public of the 1920s, was not intrinsically dangerous even when knowledge of the controls of the car were perhaps limited. Other cases heard that day for driving after dark without lights involved six horse drawn traps, five cyclists, three motor cars and a light locomotive with trailer in the timber trade. The chairman waived aside the argument put forward by the defendants, which in general were similar to those presented at Tenbury and imposed stiff fines – five shillings to fifteen shillings to

emphasise the importance he placed on the need to illuminate vehicles after dark. He made a particular example of the timber lorry and fined the owner one pound.

Pedestrians also had to act with care whilst walking along the road. *The Hereford Times* in their edition of 29 March 1922 printed a letter from 'Pedestrian' which asserted that:

anyone with a grain of intelligence will understand that a vehicle driver keeping to the left of the road will be able more easily to see a pedestrian walking along the right hand side of the road.¹⁸

This of course is true but the more rational approach for the pedestrian is to face the oncoming traffic thus putting the onus of his safety in his own hands rather than those of the driver of the vehicle. This safer procedure was to be contained in the recommendations contained within the Road Traffic Act 1930. The cautionary tales continued throughout the period of the study. The paper in September 1922 printed a photograph which illustrated that the controls of a car should be thoroughly understood before venturing upon the public highway. The photograph was:

of a big motor-car (which had) got out of hand and backed into the city shop of Madame Mount-Stephens, costumier and milliner, the car, taking the lady driver with it had smashed through the plate glass window and wrecked the interior.

The edition of the paper on 3 January 1930 included an article on a collision between two motor cars at Bromfield Road, Craven Arms in November 1929. The driver of the first car motoring south from Craven Arms towards Hereford at about eight o'clock in the evening saw another car approaching, being driven erratically and dangerously by William Downes. It transpired subsequently that Downes was drunk. He was fined three pounds with four pounds eleven shillings and three pence costs, a significant financial burden and a warning to other motorists. *The Hereford Times* published an article in December 1927 explaining the new licence rates for vehicles used in the agricultural industry. They had been set out in the Finance Act 1927 and were to come into force in January 1928. The article explained in detail the intricacies of the new rates and where they applied, and ended by reminding its readers that motor cars, motor cycles, sheep dogs, armorial

bearings and male servants all needed to be registered in time. A rush at the last minute would involve considerable stress at the Local Taxation Office.

The Hereford Times did sometimes suggest that the outcome of some court cases were a little too neat. In their edition of 6 January 1934 there was a short article on the death of Arthur Davies a motor cyclist found by a passing motorist, Percival Froud, lying unconscious on the roadway at Belmont on 20 December. He died five days later in the Herefordshire General Hospital. The constable (P.C.Lewis) noted at the scene of the accident a twelve feet long skid mark and a further mark some sixteen feet in length probably made by the footrest of the cycle. The constable had produced a plan showing the skid marks in relation to the final position of the motor bicycle. He was complimented in court by the coroner upon the usefulness of the plan to the case. However the suggested reason for the accident put forward by the constable that the rider suddenly found himself too near the verge, swerved and lost control of his machine seems unlikely since Mr Davies had been riding motor cycles for eight years, he had left work at 5:55pm in a sober state to ride home – a journey that he must have known well. His lamp was likely to have still been alight at the time of the accident since it was still warm when the constable arrived. The suggestion by P.C. Lewis ruled out any other person being involved as a cause of the accident and thus enabled the jury to close the case with a verdict of ‘accidental death’. The need for investigating the real reason for the accident and perhaps carry out some road improvement works, such as an improvement of a sharp bend, was thus unnecessary. The reason for the accident suggested by Froud who found Davies was that he might have been dazzled by an oncoming car and as a result lost control of his machine. This reason was the one favoured by the paper. The cause of the accident in the opinion of the paper was thus not clear. The attitude of the coroner in dismissing the case without burdening the police with additional work to find the actual cause of the accident reflected the attitude of officialdom to spare the force time consuming investigations. The press provided a useful background for its readers on the evolution of the application of traffic legislation as applied in Herefordshire. It is suggested that its role in giving publicity to the case of Mr Downes in November 1929 for example and emphasising the significant fines imposed upon him was useful to the police and contributed to the safety of the county road network.

The Police Force and its Duties

The police force in Herefordshire was divided from its inception into two parts each with its own Chief Constable – the city police force and the county police force. The two forces remained separate identities until after the Second World War. The Chief Constable of the county from 1857 was Captain James Drummond Telfer. He retired in 1895 and was succeeded by Captain The Hon. Evelyn Theodore Scudamore Stanhope who retired in 1923 through ill health.



Captain The Hon. Evelyn Theodore Scudamore Stanhope 1895-1923¹⁹

The photograph proclaims him
Every inch a man of 'good family'

Critchley considers that it is probable that their 'longevity in office was no bad thing during the formative years of a force'.²⁰ Stanhope was a man who had attained only modest military rank but was 'a local man of good family' - the kind of personality often chosen, Critchley found that such a person was able to give a balanced view from a position which acknowledged little higher authority. His ill health precluded Captain Stanhope from the necessity of addressing any significant highway related problems. The next Chief Constable of the county was Captain Horace Munro who continued in office until 1929 following an unremarkable career.

Critchley has described the role of the borough Chief Constable to be that of 'the executive officer of the watch committee.' Thomas Rawson the Chief Constable of the city of Hereford from 1920 to 1927 had come through the ranks. He joined the force as a constable in 1913. During the First World War he served

as an officer in the Royal Scots. In 1918 he became an Inspector/Chief Clerk in Huddersfield before moving to Hereford. He was succeeded by Freeman Newton.



Chief Constable of Herefordshire

Freeman Newton O.B.E.

1929 - 1958

Newton was the son of a London schoolmaster and had had valuable executive experience in the Indian Imperial Police which he joined in 1911. In 1929 was appointed the Chief Constable of both the city and the county of Herefordshire. He was still in office at the outbreak of the Second World War and eventually retired after 29 years in office.

The period from the early 1920s saw the work of the police force with reference to traffic legislation expanding and evolving in a manner which was not easy to foresee. A varied professional background such as both Thomas Rawson and Freeman Newton had acquired was clearly an asset in formulating a response to new problems. Freeman Newton, from 1929, was faced with two separate forces and a more mobile malefactor. The Home Office sought, in the early 1920s, to merge adjacent forces under the banner of fiscal and logistical efficiency and thus be more able to apprehend malefactors, with fewer staff. The city of Hereford members however resisted the amalgamation of the city and county forces which continued to function independently throughout the inter-war years even though in 1929 there was only one Chief Constable.²¹ It was not until the Police Act 1946 that the two forces were forced by law to be properly combined.

Dixon, the head of the Home Office Police Department noted in 1929 that:

To keep a beat manned day and night (three tours of duty) costs in the neighbourhood of £1,000 a year, and, consequently, it does not do to be too lavish with the distribution of men on the beats...think how many fewer convictions there are for drunkenness, and how much less the Police have to be engaged in what I might call repressive duties than they used to be in the slum districts of many of the towns.²²

A reduction in prosecutions arising from slum drunkenness was more than replaced with the need to enforce the new traffic legislation. This was not an easy task in Herefordshire since whilst the establishment of the two forces in 1931 called for 126 officers, in fact at that time, there were only 117 officers. The end of the 1930s saw the number of officers reduce to eighty nine. Such reduced levels of staff affected the ability of the Chief Constabulary for law enforcement. The annual reports of the Chief Inspector of Constabulary suggested avenues of improvement and included statistics of all the forces in the country. The table below is taken from the 1928 report by Sir Leonard Dunning:

Table 4.8 Statistics for 1928 Police Force²³

	Herefordshire	Gloucestershire	Hereford	Bristol
Population	71,157	309,042	17,760	299,730
Authorised Establishment	84	436	42	610
Number of constables	67	354	32	485
Net Expenditure (£)	27,936	169,690	13,223	217,938
Population per constable	1,071	873	555	618
Acreage per constable	6,367	1,807	120	31
Net expenditure per population (£)	0.39	0.55	0.75	0.73

Gloucestershire is a wealthy neighbour some one and a half times the area of Herefordshire lying on its eastern border. In rural Herefordshire however the acreage per constable was greater by some three and a half times than in rural Gloucestershire. The greater area for each constable to patrol in Herefordshire clearly affected his ability to enforce traffic legislation. Furthermore in Herefordshire the finance available to the Chief Constable per head of population was only seventy one per cent of that in Gloucestershire. The city of Bristol was chosen by way of illustration since whilst it was much larger than Hereford city (by

some seventeen times) it was in geographical layout similar to Hereford city. The acreage per constable was much greater in Hereford city by some four times but the population per constable was less – ninety per cent of that in Bristol. Thus whilst the population per constable in each city was largely the same the average for each constable in Hereford was significantly larger thus reducing his effectiveness. The net expenditure per member of the population in Hereford compares favourably with that in Bristol, £0.75 as against £0.73, the Herefordshire figures in the Inspector’s 1935 report are shown below:

Table 4.9 Statistics for 1935 Herefordshire Police Force ²³

	Herefordshire	Hereford City
Population	87681	24163
Authorised Establishment	84	42
Number of constables	67	32
Net expenditure (£)	29548	12694
Population per constable	1308	755
Net expenditure per population (£)	0.34	0.53

The population of both the city and county had risen from the 1928 figures, the former by one third and the latter by a quarter. Whilst the authorised police establishment was the same as in 1928, the actual number of officers were some eighty two per cent of this figure. In 1937 the Chief Constable was able to persuade his committee for a much needed increase of four officers for his force, two to be stationed at the Hereford headquarters with one at Rotherwas and one at Callow. Sir Llewellyn also noted with concern in his report that across the country single rural beats were being neglected particularly in summer. This would be hardly surprising in rural counties such as Herefordshire where manpower was under stress.

The police constable was generally the first point of contact between the public and the police force. Gwilt in his oral testimony mentioned of instances in the 1930s of his family and the public teasing the local constable (PC Bunn). However the examples he offered may well have been exaggerated or indeed apocryphal. They were excluded from this thesis in the interest of accuracy. The

Inspector of Constabulary's reports had mentioned the problems which arose over the abilities of the police constable with the need to prepare and present in court cases relating to highway legislation. The attributes of a man recruited as a constable were merely that he should be physically sound and of good character. Critchley notes that the requirements for promotion from constable to sergeant or inspector that applied in the Dorset Constabulary reflected those for other rural counties.²⁴ They were to be in existence in Dorset for one hundred years (1856-1956). The five requirements were:- reading, writing neatly and correctly from dictation out of the Instruction Book, and the first four rules of arithmetic with addition and subtraction of money, the fourth and fifth requirements referred to the administrative duties expected of a sergeant. A course along the Dorset lines for the Herefordshire constables was introduced by the Chief Constable in 1928. Twenty constables attended the first course. One constable failed in all the first three subjects and thirteen failed in one or two. The 1928 Inspector of Constabulary's report touched upon the matter of training. He praised the force in Birmingham City which had done more in his opinion than anyone else in this field. Ten county and twenty five city and borough forces had sent officers to their courses. Suitable courses were also offered at Cardiff and Swansea. The Inspector's report did admit, that the only real test of instruction was, so to speak, "on the hoof." The policeman was called upon to take action the propriety or legality of which may be tested in court. He did this in the full knowledge that any mistake would heap blame upon himself. Critchley has noted that a problem had arisen of attracting suitable men for the higher ranks from within the force. The difficulty was how to energise the constables who had missed promotion and thus had 'little incentive to do more than stroll about in uniform.' The need for the recruitment into the force of suitably qualified people had become more urgent since the criminal in the inter-war years had become more skilful and mobile. A Home Office proposal to encourage applicants from outside the force, however, was regarded by the Police Federation with 'implacable hostility' and did not flourish.

The Home Office was aware of the need to encourage an *esprit de corps* to energise the lower ranks of the Force to seek promotion and face the new problems which were emerging. A forum within the force where matters of concern could be discussed and resolutions sought had been established under the Police Bill which

received the Royal Assent on 17 August 1919. The Bill created a Police Federation for England and Wales came into existence in the autumn of 1919. It allowed officers to put their views via Branch Boards to the Home Secretary. The first Branch Board for Herefordshire was held in October 1919 in the Shire Hall in Hereford, but no records of the detailed contents of the meeting have been kept in HRO or of subsequent meetings. The fact that no comment appeared in the committee minutes or the press would suggest that the men were not unduly dissatisfied with the administration of their local force.

The Chief Constable were assiduous in upholding the integrity of his officers. He was sometimes approached directly by a member of the public with a complaint against a constable. The integrity of his constables was tested particularly in the investigation of traffic incidents, by one or other of the combatants. One such case occurred in 1924 when Horace Munro, the Chief Constable, of the County, received a letter from a member of the public who had offered a gratuity to a constable.²⁵ Munro replied that he felt very sorry that the individual should have thought it necessary to offer such a gratuity, as, for a long time the efforts of the police had been directed towards raising the status of the force. Sir Leonard's report of 1928 mentioned that misdemeanours or mistakes within the force as a whole were rare. The 1935 report mentioned that in the previous year in the country as a whole forty officers had been dismissed from the total force of sixty one thousand men for misdemeanours, which also could be termed rare. The police constables in the county of Herefordshire were of course not all above suspicion in this period. The HRO has a copy of the Police Misconduct book for the years 1920-1957.²⁶ The inter-war years saw only twenty-three cases of misconduct brought, three of which were dismissed. Of these, two were brought in 1928 against a particular constable. He was accused by a member of the public firstly of walking with a married woman by the River Wye and thereby bringing the reputation of the force into disrepute and, secondly, of engaging in underhand fiscal practices. The third case occurred in 1938 and was again brought by a member of the public. A constable was accused of using his authority for his own personal advantage. Nineteen of the remaining twenty cases involved internal retribution, eight involved drink and ten involved being absent from duty without leave. The only substantiated case involving traffic management in the whole period occurred in 1923 and was brought by a member of

the public. It occurred at a time of learning for both the public and the force. It involved an over-zealous constable and an aggrieved farmer and a matter of where one should safely park a vehicle on market day in Bromyard. The Chief Constable agreed with the farmer that the constable had been over enthusiastic and cautioned his constable. It is interesting that the case involved enthusiasm rather than neglect and occurred in the 'learning' stage in the early 1920s. No constable was dismissed for a misdemeanour from the local force by the Chief Constable in the period of the study.

The 1928 report of the Inspector of Constabulary Sir Leonard Dunning emphasised that the police force were 'keen to foster happy relations with the public' He considered that the 'cordial relationship' was a facet of police work which was not always present in the country as a whole in their dealings with the public in traffic matters. Sir Leonard included the following passage:

The bad driver on the public road, whether he drives badly because he knows no better or because he sacrifices the interests of all other users of the road to his wish for unnecessary speed, protests that the police would be better employed in looking after house-breakers than after him, but for one complaint about theft there are hundreds which demand safety and convenience for the ordinary user of the public road. It is true that the activities of the police in trying to secure these, lead to some diminution of the happy relations which generally exist between police and public, and even this might be smaller if the public would realize the extent to which police action is stimulated by their complaints; the police are only too anxious to get the public on their side, and by persuading and helping them to avoid offence to save the necessity for prosecution.

He went on to note that it was, and had been, the practice of the force since the early 1900s to inform the driver of his misdemeanour and request that more care should be exercised in future. He found that such letters reduced the number of offences and enhanced the air of mutual respect. He found however it necessary to state that:

It may be useful to contradict one oft-repeated statement – fines do not go into the pocket of the policeman whose evidence helped secure a conviction but to the Road Fund

The city force included in its duties directing traffic and assisting in the manning of the Hereford City Fire Brigade and Ambulance. The former of these

two duties was particularly time consuming and had been the object of a plea by the Inspector of Constabulary's report in 1928 across the country as a whole for the constable to be replaced by traffic lights. However the installation of traffic lights was beyond the means of the Hereford City Council. The difficult A449 Worcester Road junction with the A438 in the centre of Ledbury required control. It was preferable and cheaper, however, in the opinion of the committee, to employ an AA patrolman rather than forego the availability of a constable. The second two additional duties continued up to the end of the study period but provided the force with the ability to collect data suitable for a possible subsequent court case. The Herefordshire police force reacted to the intentions of the Road Traffic Act 1930 and created a 'specialist department for dealing with traffic matters.' (Appendix III). The section was given for its use three motor cycles and one motor cycle combination. This was the only specific mobile provision for the section to patrol an area of some 818sq miles. By the end of 1930s the section had become better equipped and saw the force provided with six cars. With large areas to patrol the rural constables who possessed a pedal cycle or motorcycle were provided with an allowance for their machine. The Home Secretary had set up a committee to inquire into the whole field of detective work in 1933.²⁷ It acknowledged that wireless communications should be developed but technical problems prevented any comprehensive planning. It was only with the threat of war and the possibility that land lines could be interrupted that a sense of urgency was instilled and high-frequency techniques began to be used. Communication within the Herefordshire force however was not at this level to the detriment of its efficiency. Out of the forty two police stations in the Herefordshire area, in 1938, thirty did not have the use of a land telephone.²⁸

Other aspects of the work of the Chief Constable of the city were concerned with the safety of public service vehicles, the provision of parking spaces in urban areas and commenting upon traffic management proposals suggested by either members of the public or other bodies. The reports of Thomas Rawson to committee were informative and indicated the range of concern required of the city police force in seeking road safety. A subject of particular concern was, in the early 1920s, the growth in the number of bus operators who had begun operating services into the city. His report of February 1925 to the Watch Committee noted that:

the number of motor omnibuses and charr-a-banc bringing passengers into the city on market days on Wednesdays and Saturdays had greatly increased in the last three years.

This mode of transport was popular and in his opinion could only increase in the future. He sought the application of regulations to ensure the safety of the public using the vehicles. He continued:

Your Committee will appreciate that any regulations which are made could only apply to such of these vehicles as actually “ply for hire” in the City. It is certain, however, that most if not all the ‘buses engaged on the local services do more than that, they do not restrict themselves to carrying from the City the identical passengers brought in by them on the inward journey, and thus they are brought within the purview of your Local Authority.

The Chief Constable was understandably anxious to provide safe conveyances for the public. He noted that the annual inspection of all hackney carriages and coaches which plied for hire in the City was due. He proposed to warn the owners of all motor omnibuses not already licensed that he would require them to submit their vehicles for inspection. The Chief Constable then set out his ideas as to what features made a safe bus. He intended to follow the requirements of the Metropolitan and Birmingham licensing authorities. In particular he would check the chassis, wheelbase, clearance, springs, brakes, steering gear, change speed gear, silencer, outlets, lighting and bodywork of the vehicles. He intended to extend the conditions, with special application to omnibuses, which had not previously been required in City, to provide additional safety features for the public. These were:

The number of persons which the omnibus is licensed to carry shall be painted on the vehicle inside in a conspicuous position in the following manner, ‘Licensed to carry.....persons.’ An emergency exit where required to be provided capable of being opened both from outside and inside of the omnibus with reasonable promptitude. No seats to be allowed at or in front of the emergency exit. The emergency exit to be opened every day. Suitable notices to be placed in all omnibuses instructing the public how to open the emergency exits. All omnibuses to carry one or two fire extinguishers and directions as to their use. The petrol tank not to be opened or filled whilst passengers are in or upon the omnibus, nor whilst the engine is running. No omnibus to carry passengers after dark unless the lighting arrangements are in order. Parcels or bundles not to be carried if they constitute an obstruction.

It is evident that these additional safety features arose from the experience of observing the running of the omnibuses. It is interesting that such detailed comments should be made regarding emergency exits and illustrates his care of passenger safety. An accident involving a motor bus could of course result in a disproportionate number of injuries.

Traffic congestion and obstructive vehicle parking also emerged as a problem in the city in the mid 1920s. Rawson reported to his Committee in May 1925 in the following vein:

The growth of motor traffic in recent times, and the ever-increasing influx to the ranks of owner-drivers, with the consequent congestion in the various cities and towns, is responsible for public opinion tolerating the idea and practice of allowing highways and streets to be used as 'parking places', and had such a proposal as is outlined in the Report been put forward not so very many years ago, I venture to say, it would have been received by emphatic protest and determined opposition.

His proposal, supported by the committee, was that it was:

necessary that any parking places which are allotted should be near or convenient to the centre of the City and in wide thoroughfares where the position of cars when 'parked' would not encroach upon the traffic lines; and/or in side streets where there is little or no through traffic. With regard to the length of time a car will be permitted to stand in a 'parking place' without Police interference, I would recommend that no limit should be fixed by any Regulations your Committee may make other than a stipulation that it is for a 'reasonable time' which you ought not attempt to define. The question of what would be an 'unreasonable' time would depend on varying circumstances such as time of day, the particular street, position in street, etc., and in charges of obstruction this would be a question of fact to be decided in each case by itself, without reference to a general principle or rule. I feel too that such a Regulation as to time from a Police point of view would be impracticable to enforce.

These comments by the Chief Constable reflected the general approach taken in the mid 1920s towards the motor car. The number of cars using the roads was increasing but at that time there was little knowledge of what the rate of future increases would be or what would be the attitude of the drivers regarding courtesy towards the other users of the highway. He recommended a 'wait and see' approach relying upon the good sense of the constable to be able to sustain an accusation of

'dangerous' parking. Rawson did emphasise that no one had the right to park their vehicle on the highway and that he considered that a quarter of an hour would be an acceptable time for shopping. He did admit that a persistent problem arose in relation to the farming community whose horse drawn carts and wagons were parked outside public houses for long periods on market days. The City Watch Committee however tended to be lenient towards the farmers. Whilst the District Chamber of Commerce did not consider parking a problem as long as trade was buoyant.

The Chief Constable of the city also commented upon proposed traffic management measures. In his report of May 1929 he discussed the use of white lines on the road surface. He noted that the technical specification of the white line material was in its infancy (in the late 1920s) and as a consequence had a life expectancy of only a matter of months. He also noted that the larger cities installed studs or plates set in cement or concrete in the road surface, a lasting solution, but costly and beyond the means then of Hereford city. He considered that:

over lavish use of white lines in any locality may tend to give drivers of vehicles an unwarranted sense of security. He had ensured that at all the real danger spots in the centre of the city viz. High Town, Broad Street and Eign Street, policemen are employed in traffic direction, and I would submit that at these points white lines would not serve any useful purpose. I am of the opinion that on straight roads such as White Cross and King's Acre Roads, white lines are an absurdity as motorists on this type of road would naturally depend upon a sense of vision rather than on a marked line. I certainly think that a white line on a straight road would not have the effect of keeping motor traffic any closer to the nearside of the road.

Bus companies continued to cause him concern. The Red and White Company failed in September 1930 to obtain a licence for nine of their fifteen vehicles and consequently they underwent no safety inspection. They however continued to run all their vehicles. They were taken to court and ordered to pay the maximum fine of two pounds, to them a derisory sum. They continued to operate the vehicles without a licence. The Chief Constable thought that perhaps a letter from the town clerk may have had more effect. Another example of doubtful practices by omnibus operators was reported in November 1930. The Chief Constable drew the attention of the committee to the matter of:

the manner in which the omnibus services between Hereford and Leominster are being operated. It seems that for nearly two years V. Morgan of St Martin Street, Hereford, has been running hourly services each day from Hereford to Leominster with considerable success and convenience to the general public. Sometime after, the Birmingham and Midland Motor Omnibus Co Ltd commenced to operate a similar service, and the outcome was a fare-cutting competition between the parties concerned. In addition the Birmingham and Midland Company commenced running unscheduled trips. The unscheduled trips were withdrawn at my request but the position now is that the Midland Company are running buses 15 minutes before those of Morgan. There has also been a certain amount of dangerous driving indulged in, in efforts to obtain custom. All those things are not in the best interests of the travelling public, and I would respectfully suggest that your Committee instruct the Town Clerk to communicate with these two firms and suggest that they operate the route mentioned by running buses at alternate hours instead of as at present.²⁹

The efforts of the Chief Constable did bear fruit in this case and an amicable solution was attained. This commercial dispute highlighted in the Chief Constable's report had given rise to an element of dangerous driving and on such a well frequented route – between Hereford and Leominster – is likely to have been in the public knowledge. The Chief Constable was, understandably, anxious to find a solution to the problem to dissuade other bus companies on less frequented and hence more dangerous routes from indulging in similar malpractice.

The improving bus services brought more pedestrians into the city and towns of Herefordshire. Congestion began to occur on the footways and pavements in the centre of urban areas. A member suggested in August 1930 that pedestrians should follow the rule of the roadway and keep to the left of the pavement. The committee sensibly at the suggestion of the Chief Constable, since enforcement would have been impracticable, let this suggestion lie on the table. The Chief Constable was increasingly made aware in the 1930s of defects in the road systems which were noted by a more perceptive public. His report of July 1931 for example commented on the lack of acceptable street lighting at the junction of North Villa Road and Aylestone Hill in Hereford City which had been put forward as the cause of an accident there. The Committee notified the County Surveyor of the comments of the Chief Constable. The necessary works were included in the surveyor's programme.

Traffic congestion continued to be a problem in the city. Newton put before his committee of September 1930 a report on the matter. He remarked that:

the question of traffic control and congestion is a problem which has been, and still is, receiving the attention of practically all local authorities throughout the country. The ever-increasing influx to the ranks of the owner drivers, and the great expansion in omnibus and charabanc services with consequent congestion in the various cities and towns are presenting a problem which, of necessity, must receive the closest possible attention of the authorities responsible for the regulation of vehicular traffic, and the safety of pedestrians.

He made reference to a circular issued by the Ministry of Transport. They considered that:

The streets are provided for the King's subjects to pass along, and not to be reserved for the use of any particular section of the community. The present regulations confer a temporary privilege on motorists allowing them to use the streets as a garage for a limited time.

Newton argued that:

Hereford is a city possessed of a very few really wide streets, and built before the consideration of any question of traffic congestion became necessary. It must be borne in mind that Hereford is a shopping centre for a large district, and its prosperity to some extent depends on attracting people to the city, not only as a shopping centre but also as a tourist centre, so that it may be said that more than ordinary facilities should be given to motorists in Hereford. It is apparent therefore that with such a large volume of moving traffic the general parking of cars in the street not only adds to the congestion, but is a source of danger particularly to pedestrians. In preparing any scheme, however, consideration must be given to tradesmen whose premises adjoin the main streets of the city where the congestion is at its worst.

The Chief Constable thus confirmed that parking had become a serious problem and could give rise to the possibilities of an accident. Being mindful that some three years previously a Justice of the Peace had complained that it does not require young men of strength and stature to take the numbers of motor cars causing obstructions in side streets and to stand by until the offender appears to have "particulars taken." the city council accepted that finance would be necessary to ameliorate the problem. The Chief Constable mindful of the Inspector of Constabulary to foster kindly relations with the public, erected helpful notices in December 1932 which indicated to motorists where long-stay parking places existed. Some fifteen sites of up to eighty places were indicated where all-day

parking could be obtained. The notice also gave details of shorter term locations as follows:

If you are likely to stay for two hours cars may be parked free of charge in any of the following streets:-

Castle Street
Commercial Road
St. Martin Street
St. Owen Street

If your stay is shorter still, you may leave your car for a **reasonable time only** in the following streets:-

High Town	Within the steel studs
Broad Street	“ “ “
Commercial Street	One side only, as shown by notices.

and in fact, all other streets except-

High Street
Eign Street
Widemarsh Street (High Town to Maylord Street)
St. Peter Street
Union Street

where parking and standing is prohibited because of the narrowness of the streets and in order to allow a normal flow of traffic. These arrangements have been made to assist motorists after consultation with the A.A. and R.A.C.

Suggestions arose in the Roads and Bridges Committee which perhaps more properly should have been considered by the Chief Constable. One such was put before the first quarterly meeting in 1928. The suggestion concerned the herding of stock along the road after dark. A note had been received from Holland County Council stating that they considered it to be a dangerous practice and lights should always be carried in such circumstances since it had been the cause of a number of accidents including one fatality. The Roads and Bridges Committee members after consultation with the Chief Constable did not consider that such the problem arose in Herefordshire. They considered that no prudent Herefordshire farmer would drive stock along the road in the dark for the obvious dangers that could be created. It is interesting that blame should be assumed to lie with the farmer rather than the motorist who with the benefit of the lights on his vehicle, which by law should be in working order, should be able to see the cattle in the lights of his vehicle and secondly not be travelling at such a speed that he could not take avoiding action.

Conclusion

The work of the police force in Herefordshire, as exemplified by the HRO records fell into three categories. The first two being essentially reactive, law enforcement and supervising the safety of public service vehicles, creating parking provisions in urban areas and responding to traffic management suggestions from the public. The attitude of the force in both these categories appears to have had the support of the public. The third -public education- was proactive through the medium of the AA and NSFR. The Road Traffic Act 1930 brought a sense of order to the evolving field of traffic legislation. It set out in an orderly fashion suggested misdemeanours and a tariff of penalties. It emphasised the need for courtesy when using the road network. The courts records kept in the HRO illustrate the extent to which the local Police Force and Magistrates in Herefordshire were influenced by the Act. The Press in reporting local court cases offers little adverse criticism of the attitudes taken by the Force and the Magistrates. Generally the first point of contact between the police force and the public in the context of law enforcement was the local constable, the entry requirement for which was that the applicant should be merely of good character and be physically capable. Establishing the facts of an accident and bringing the case to court was a time consuming burden for the constable which could be ill afforded by an under staffed local force. The actual number of staff throughout the two decades was less than the authorised establishment and even at the outbreak of war in 1939 the committee did not support the number of additional members of the force requested by the Chief Constable.

There is no doubt that the key to any assessment of the efficacy of a police force with respect to traffic matters revolves about its relationship with the public. A considerable amount of academic attention has been paid to efforts of Police Forces in the inter-war years to achieve a safe road network however this has generally looked at the country as a whole. The evidence available in the HRO would support the view that the efforts of the local force were appreciated by the public at large in the county. Further attention could focus upon rural counties to ascertain if similar conclusions revealed in this thesis could be drawn elsewhere or whether more dominant conclusions emerge.

Notes:

1. Taylor, *A Crisis of 'Modernisation'*, 127
2. HRO L15/3-5 Dore, L15/1-2 Bredwardine, H38/15 – 42 Hereford City
3. HRO 35/184 City Watch Committee, C156/1 et seq county Standing Joint Committee including 09.11/1930
4. F. Llewellyn-Jones, *The Road Traffic Act 1930*, Sweet and Maxwell (1931), iii 395
5. SO'Connell, *The Car in British Society*. 144. 112.
6. R.Davis, *Death on the Street*, 37
7. W. Plowden, *The motor car and politics in Britain*. 94. 126.
8. J Foreman-Peck *Death on the Roads*
9. M Ishque and R Noland, Making Roads Safe for Pedestrians, *Journal of Transport History* March 2006 Volume 27 Issue 1. 126.
10. J Moran, Crossing the Road in Britain 1931 – 1976, *Historical Journal* June 2006 Volume 49 Issue 26. 480.
11. HRO T59/419/09/1925 18/05/1927 and 15/10/1932
12. Taylor, *A Crisis of 'Modernisation'*. 121. 124.
13. C Emsley, *The Law, The Police and the Regulation of motor traffic*, 352
14. Inspector of Constabulary C/56 26/11/1928
15. *Hereford Times* 19/09/1936
16. S O'Connell, *The Car in British Society*. 113.
17. *Leominster News* 02/01/1920, 06/08/1920
18. *Hereford Times*, 29/03/1922, 09/1922, 03/01/1930, 06/01/1934
19. G Forrest and E Hadley, *Policing in Hereford and Leominster*. 26. 28. 29. 37. 131.
20. T A Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*. 114.
21. HRO C/56 31/03/1931
22. A L Dixon, *Police Powers and Procedures*, Home Office Police Department (1929). 180.
23. HRO C/56 and PRO ZHC1, Chief Inspector of Constabulary 1928 and 1935
24. T A Critchley, *A History of Police in England and Wales*, 132. 150. 151.
25. HRO C/56 08/1924
26. HRO C56 Misconduct Book
27. Home Office Report C/56 15/04/7935
28. HRO C/56 14/02/1938 The apparent disregard of modern equipment should be set against the comment of Graham Stewart in the 19 July 2008 Times that Neville Chamberlain in the late 1930s only had one telephone in his weekend retreat at Chequers which was located in the kitchen.
- 29.** HRO C/56 09/1930 11/1930 S O'Connell, *The Car in British Society*. 117. 118.

**MANAGEMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC
IN HEREFORDSHIRE 1919 - 1939**

**CONCLUSION
SELF MANAGEMENT or POLICE ADJUSTMENT?**

The transport studies of the period 1919 to 1939 in British history have largely concentrated upon the national scene and urban areas where increases in the use of motor vehicles were greatest and their affects most noticeable. Less attention has been paid to the rural areas of the country. This pioneering study has considered the extent of the increased use of motor vehicles and their effect on road safety in the rural county of Herefordshire. It sets the changing transport scene in the county in the tribulations of the economic upheavals of the inter-war years which were less pronounced in the rural areas of the country. This enabled the public there to enjoy new freedoms which before the First World War were only available to a minority. Governmental involvement in everyday life increased in the inter-war years to the animosity of the public. The increased use of motor vehicles was encouraged by the diminution of the presence of the railways in Herefordshire. Vehicles, be they buses or lorries both provided cheap adaptable travel for the majority of the populace.

Road safety was increasingly put at risk by the number of vehicles using the road. The road network inherited by the County Surveyor was constructed of water bound graded stone on an alignment suitable for horse and cart, clearly unsuitable for the heavier, faster moving new motor vehicles. He was however able in the two decades to provide proactive support for road safety by improving the strength of the road surface and limited re-alignment of the carriageway. However, in the county no complete re-alignment was achieved in the inter-war years due to the fact that it involved the acquisition of agricultural land which was resisted by a county council whose members supported the farming community. The enforcement of traffic legislation was essentially reactive and has been the subject of much academic attention. Doubt has been cast upon the accident statistics presented by chief constables to their committees. Be that as it may, the public in Herefordshire

did not leave a record of dissatisfaction concerning the work of the local Police Force.

The Hereford Record Office holds a considerable volume of primary records and local histories. Amongst the primary records are the traffic counts required by the Ministry of Transport to assess the level of grant applicable to each county for their road improvement programmes. The counts were taken for a week in the August of each year at 50 sites throughout the county on trunk roads, principal roads and local distributors. The two trunk roads in the county were the A40 in the south through Ross and the A49 running south to north through the county from Monmouth via Leominster to Ludlow in Shropshire. These two highways were the most heavily used. Counts in the early 1920s noted the number of stock 'on the hoof' that used the road. On the local distributor B4214 north of Bromyard in August 1923 the number of motor vehicles formed only one quarter of the number of users of the highway. The use of the road networks by stock on the hoof largely disappeared by the late 1920s and were consequently not included in the counts. Another count on the B4214 in August 1939 noted that the number of motor cars had increased by nine times over the 1923 figure. The greatest concentration of motor vehicles in the county was in Hereford city and in particular at a point just south of the single bridge over the River Wye. A traffic count in August 1938 revealed that the average daily vehicle tonnage at this location was 10071. This compares with 3714 on the A40 east of Ross and 3236 on the A49 north of Leominster and at the other end of the scale on the principal road B4113 east of Leintwardine in the north of the county of only 466. The counts reveal that the most heavily tracked roads were within the urban areas and the two trunk roads the A40 and A49. The increase in vehicular use of these highways in the inter-war years was in the order of fifty per cent. However the local distributors connecting the dispersed rural population saw, during the same period, much larger increases. The B4214, north of Bromyard, saw the number of cars increase by six times and lorries by nine times. Records kept of vehicle and driving licences and vehicle sales confirm the picture painted by the traffic counts. The increased number of vehicles using the county road networks presented the County Surveyor with significant maintenance problems.

The County Surveyor, in noting the increases in vehicular use of the county road network, was able to organise the maintenance and small scale improvement to the network and hence offer an improvement to its safety. The record of his work has formed the heart of this study. The quarterly and annual reports of Jack, the County Surveyor, presented to his committee were detailed, wide-ranging and informative. Jack had held the post of County Surveyor from 1907 until 1933 which was a period of the most dramatic changes in use and structure of the county road network. In 1923, he listed for his committee, in great technical detail, the various methods of surface treatment with which he had experimented to find a lasting solution to the question of a strong surface. His preferred solution was bitumen-coated stone. He had laid a three mile length of this type in 1923, the first of its kind in England. The question of which was the most efficient form of road surfacing was much discussed in the engineering profession throughout the decade. A meeting at Oxford in 1929, attended by Borough and County engineers from the Midland area, illuminated the differences of approach of some members of the audience. There were suggestions that rubber or wood blocks on a concrete base could become the surface treatment of the future. The outcome of the meeting, however, was that the most suitable form of surface treatment was bitumen-coated stone, expensive but long lasting. This became the accepted solution throughout the country thereafter. Jack's work carried out some six years before the meeting was both technically advanced and prescient in its expectations in the increases in vehicular use that would be made of the county road network.

The works programme of the highways department by the middle of the 1930s, became more straight forward. The public through the medium of The Road and Bridges Committee petitioned for improvements to both alignment and surfacing, some of which the County Surveyor was able to include in his programme of works. The reports of the County Surveyor, Gurney, were less dramatic being, in the main, recitals of minor works. The area of responsibility of the County Surveyor had by the 1930s extended to cover the highway related work of the borough engineers and as a consequence his staff had by the late 1930s increased to twenty nine. The range of work he undertook included traffic management schemes and an attempt at the construction of a concrete road surface. This latter episode failed however through machine failure and operative

inexperience. Through Gurney's encouragement a number of his staff did become chartered engineers. The Ministry of Transport in the 1930s took under its direct supervision both the design and construction of improvements to the country's trunk road system, a move much abhorred by the Herefordshire Committee who wished that all highway related work should remain with their County Surveyor. However a confrontation did not arise since no such improvement in the county was attempted in the inter-war years. Improvements to the alignment and widths of the road network in the county were clearly desirable to be able to accommodate the increased vehicular usage. The difficulty for the County Surveyor was finance. Even with the Ministry grants no new roads were constructed during the inter-war years, merely local improvements. The road surfacing in this period was an emerging study. The maintenance periods of the existing waterbound stone construction were reduced to a matter of months rather than years as was the case before the First World War. Many solutions were offered but that suggested by the County Surveyor in 1923 as a result of his pioneering work was bitumen-coated stone which became universally accepted in the 1930s and thereafter.

Immediately after the First World War the petty crime rate in the country as a whole significantly reduced causing concern to Chief Constables who feared a diminution in the size of their force. They embraced the implementation of traffic legislation as a saviour for their man power and were encouraged in their attitude by a government intent on developing a new lucrative industry - motor vehicle manufacture. The practicalities of the work of the county police force with reference to traffic legislation were, in the 1920s, a learning curve. The attitude of the public to the new legislation was an unknown and possibly changing dimension. The first point of contact between the public and the county force was usually the constable. In furtherance of an investigation of a traffic misdemeanour, particularly a motor accident, the constable had to balance conflicting accounts, prepare a case and present it at court all of which involved him in much labour and time. The county and city force in Herefordshire were in fact understaffed for the whole of the inter-war period. A sense of order for traffic legislation was provided by the Road Traffic Act 1930 which provided a schedule of fines for various misdemeanours the most onerous being those for dangerous driving. A code of good conduct was also included.

The court records and committee notes kept in the HRO enable a detailed analysis of the work of the two forces to be attempted. The implementation of traffic legislation took a greater proportion of the county forces time where it was more prevalent than that of the city. A single Chief Constable - Freeman Newton - was appointed in 1929 over the two forces which, however with committee approval, continued to function separately. He provided detailed road accident statistics for the quarterly and annual meetings of his members. Those presented at the last quarterly meeting in 1939 were most illuminating. The years covered by these statistics were the decade up to 1938. He noted that whilst traffic volume had significantly increased in that period, the number of persons killed in the county as a result of a road accident had not, they had remained fairly consistent at an annual average figure of a little over seventeen. These statistics were accepted without comment by both the committee and press. The reports offered brief statistical analysis rather than solutions, a practice to which the committee did not take exception. The role of police in Herefordshire in enforcing traffic legislation was largely reactive. The diminution in petty crime rates after the First World War encouraged the chief constables to widen the scope of their activities in order to maintain staffing levels - the enforcement of traffic legislation was a simple option. Preparing and bringing case to court was time consuming a commodity the force could ill afford. Another aspect of their work the inspection of public service vehicles and the provision of urban parking spaces brought much praise from the public.

The public at large in Herefordshire, as perceived through the county council committee reports and the response of the press, had by the end of the 1930s accepted that one of the dis-benefits of motor vehicle usage was the occurrence of road accidents. The County Surveyor carried out improvements to the road surface, widening of the carriageway and the removal of sharp bends – all of which contributed to greater road safety. The 1920s saw a learning curve for both the Police Force and the public in the control of motor vehicles. The statistics presented by the Chief Constable in 1939, mentioned above, indicated that from the year 1932 there was no significant increase apart from the single year 1935 in the number of road accidents and those involving death or injury. No public dissatisfaction was indicated in the committee minutes or the press. It could be said, therefore, that no

fault was found by the public in the management of road traffic in Herefordshire between the years 1919 and 1939. The lack of any rise in the recorded number of fatal road accidents in spite of increasing traffic levels which occurred in the county in the 1930s is perhaps unusual. Whilst no evidence emerged from the HRO records it may be the case that in rural areas where acquaintance and family circles were wide more care on the roads as a consequence was taken. Further research both in Herefordshire and similar counties could be instigated to ascertain whether the low accident rate was replicated and whether the reason for such a result was similar to that suggested above or whether more dominant reasons emerge.

Appendices

THINGS MY MOTHER SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME

 Gear-changing, ladies?
Why, nothing simpler!



4-DOOR SALOON £285

(Ex Works, Hendon)

Flush-type weatherproof sliding roof, £10 extra.

Fixed-head Coupé . . . £295

All-weather Saloon and Drop-head Coupé . . . £325

Special 26-h.p. model for overseas.

 FAULTLESS GEAR - CHANGE

No double declutching, no "feeling" for gears, no stalling, no noise—you never need make a bad gear-change on the Vauxhall Cadet. Synchro-Mesh gears give you a feeling of expert control; the Silent Second makes it pleasant to use your gears as you should. And in performance and appearance the Cadet is all you could wish for. Ask any dealer for a trial run, or write to General Motors Ltd., The Hyde, Hendon, London, N.W.9.

"WHAT do you think Daddy had the cheek to tell me?" inquired Sheila. "He said he got a Vauxhall Cadet this time so that I shouldn't make a row with the gears. I, mind you! When he himself used to make an awful clatter on the old car!"

"Too bad," responded Peter—always the dutiful fiancé. "Still," he added, thoughtfully, "whether he was studying you or himself,

he's picked a winner. I suppose you know this car's got Synchro-Mesh?"

"I didn't—but I'll tell you what I do know. I know that you don't have to double-declutch when you want to change down—you just move the lever, and there you are in second, without making a sound."

"Exactly," chuckled Peter. "That's what Synchro-Mesh does for you—besides giving you a quieter second gear than you've ever known before."

VAUXHALL CADET

(17 H.P. — SIX CYLINDERS)

It's British

COMPLETE RANGE OF MODELS ON VIEW AT 174-182 GREAT PORTLAND STREET, LONDON, W.1

APPENDIX II – Traffic Counts B4214 August 1923 and 1939

FORM No. 155 (ROADS).

STATISTICS OF TRAFFIC (SUMMARY FORM).

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT—(ROADS DEPARTMENT).

County..... *H. Hereford*

District..... *Bromyard Rural*

Name of Road..... *Bromyard - Tenbury*

Whether " Main " or " District " Road..... *Main*

Ministry of Transport Classification (and Number, if known)..... *Class II*

Reference No. of Census Point..... *16*

Location of Census Point..... *N. Ironstone Bridge, Tenbury Rd., Bromyard*

Days on which Census was taken..... *Aug 13-19 1923*

Time : Each day from *6*.....a.m. to..... *10*.....p.m.

NOTE.—In " District " insert name of Non-County Borough, Urban or Rural District in which situated, and in Scotland name of Burgh or District. In " Name of Road " insert names of nearest towns joined by it.

DIRECTIONS.

REPORT :—The Surveyor's report required on page 2 should include :—

- (1) Particulars of any SPECIAL traffic, *e.g.*, goods or produce from or to any industrial or agricultural centre, giving origin and destination of such traffic, and stating approximately the proportion of such special traffic to the total enumerated for any class of vehicle.
- (2) The terminal points of Omnibus and Tramcar services enumerated in the census, and, where possible, the frequency of such services.
- (3) Points of commencement and termination of the length of road to which this census is applicable, having regard to cross and branch roads, etc., where traffic is diverted.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
1-2	
3-12	
13	
19	
22-24	
Total	

TRAFFIC RECORD.

(Compiled from Form No. 154 (Roads)).

Classification of Vehicles	Assumed average weight Tons	Number each day of 16 hours							These columns to be left blank.						
		Sun							Total in seven days		Average number per day	Average weight per day	Weight per cent. on Item 26	Num-ber per cent. on sum of Items 13 & 19	Traffic Volume
		avg. 13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Number	Weight in Tons					
1 Motor Cycles (including Side-Car Combinations)	0.25	20	25	20	21	10	23	15	134	33.5	19.14	4.79	2.5	16.8	
2 Motor Cars (including Motor Cabs and any other motor vehicles not specified)	1.6	25	36	24	55	20	25	17	212	339.2	30.29	48.46	28.5	26.7	
3 Motor Vans (covered)	2.5	5	3	-	7	5	1	-	21	52.5	3.0	7.5	4.0	2.6	
4 Motor Omnibuses (including Motor Coaches)	6.0	6	-	4	5	-	3	-	18	108	2.57	15.43	8.1	2.3	
5 Motor Lorries (rubber tyres)	8.0	6	2	6	4	5	3	-	26	208	3.71	29.71	15.6	3.3	
6 Trailers to rubber tyred Lorries	5.0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	1.4	.7	4	1	
7 Motor Lorries (steel tyres)	10.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
8 Trailers to steel tyred Lorries	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
9 Light Tractors	7.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
10 Trailers to Light Tractors	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
11 Traction Engines	15.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
12 Trailers to Traction Engines	8.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
13 TOTAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAILERS		63	66	64	92	40	55	32	412	742.2	58.85	106.62	56.1	51.5	
14 Light Vehicles (one horse)	0.9	32	46	33	115	41	49	9	325	292.5	46.43	41.79	22.0	110.9	
15 Light Vehicles (two or more horses)	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
16 Heavy Vehicles (one horse)	1.75	6	12	6	26	3	-	-	49	85.75	7.0	13.25	6.4	6.2	
17 Heavy Vehicles (two or more horses)	3.5	2	4	-	-	1	2	-	9	31.5	1.29	4.5	2.4	1.1	
18 Omnibuses (two or more horses)	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
19 TOTAL HORSE-DRAWN VEHICLES ...		40	62	39	137	45	51	9	323	409.75	54.72	58.54	30.5	48.2	
20 Tramcars ()†	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-							
21 Ordinary Cycles	0.09	63	80	80	99	54	123	48	547	49.23	78.42	7.03	2.7		
22 Horses (led or ridden)	0.5	5	27	9	5	6	12	4	65	32.5	9.71	4.7	2.6		
23 Cattle	0.3	-	18	-	127	1	-	5	151	45.3	21.57	6.47	3.4		
24 Sheep and Pigs	0.1	-	-	-	456	-	-	-	456	45.6	18.24	6.11	2.4		
25 Hand-carts and Barrows	-	12	13	9	11	5	12	-	62						

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (ROADS DEPARTMENT).

County HEREFORDSHIRE District BROMYARD, R. D. Borough
 Urban
 Rural
 Ministry of Transport
 Route Number B. 4214 Permanent Number of Census Point 4183
 Location of Census Point BUCKENHILL LODGE, BROMYARD
 Police District BROMYARD
 Dates on which Census was taken 14th AUG. TO 20th AUG. 1939
 Time: Each day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

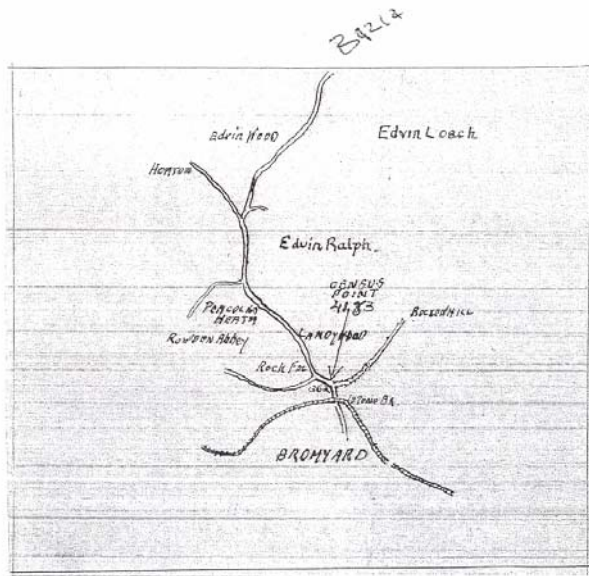
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

(Including particulars of any SPECIAL TRAFFIC or SPECIAL FACTORS which affect the traffic at this point, and/or which affect the traffic compared with the traffic at the last CENSUS, e.g., opening of alternative routes, peculiar conditions during the census week, exceptional weather conditions, or nature of any road improvement works (widening, etc.) carried out since last Census.)

Traffic similar to before.

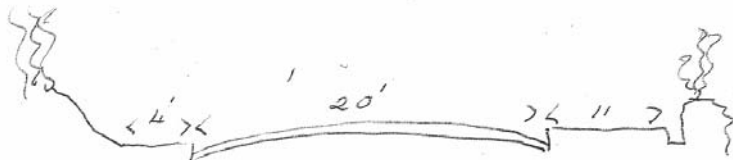
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE.

I CERTIFY that the statistics recorded on Form No. 155A (Roads) have been taken and compiled under my direction, and I am satisfied that they represent, as far as practicable, a correct record of the traffic passing the position indicated on the map shown on the reverse side of this Form.



CROSS-SECTION.—A sketch is desired below, showing the widths and form of construction at the Census Point. If there is a tramway or light railway at the point this should be clearly marked.

Width of metalled, surfaced or paved carriageway..... 20 feet.
 Width of footways..... nil feet.
 Width of margins..... 11' 6" feet.



Carpeting on Semi Grouted Macadam

TRAFFIC CENSUS: SUMMARY.

* Day Traffic (6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily).
~~* Night Traffic (10 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily).~~

* Delete line inapplicable.

Classification of Vehicles	Number each day of 16 hours.						
	DAYS.						
	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
	DATES.						
	14 TH	15 TH	16 TH	17 TH	18 TH	19 TH	20 TH
1. Motor Cycles (including Side-Car Combinations and light three-wheeled Passenger Carrying vehicles) ...	20	28	26	23	25	41	42
2. Motor Cars (including Motor Cabs)...	201	187	157	187	155	187	366
3. Motor Cars with Trailer		1		3		1	2
Motor Omnibuses—							
4. (4-wheel) Single Deck including Motor Coaches	1	1		9		4	8
5. (4-wheel) Double Deck							
6. (6-wheel) Single Deck including Motor Coaches							
7. (6-wheel) Double Deck							
TOTAL OF ITEMS 1—7	222	217	183	222	180	233	418
8. Light 3-wheeled Goods Vehicles ...							
9. Motor Vans	20	25	33	21	27	25	8
Motor and Steam Lorries—							
10. 4-wheel	41	32	35	42	38	19	7
11. 4-wheel, with Trailer							
12. 6 and 8-wheel	5		5	5	5	3	
13. 6 and 8-wheel, with Trailer ...							
14. Tractor Trailer Combinations (5-wheel)							
15. Tractor Trailer Combinations (6-wheel)	1						
16. Tractor Trailer Combinations (8-wheel)							
17. Light Tractors	1						
18. Light Tractors, with Trailer ...							
19. Traction Engines							
20. Trailers to Traction Engines ...							
TOTAL OF ITEMS 8—20	68	57	73	68	70	47	15
TOTAL MOTOR AND STEAM VEHICLES AND TRAILERS	290	274	256	290	250	280	433
21. Horse-Drawn Vehicles	3	2		8	1		1
TOTAL MOTOR, STEAM, AND HORSE-DRAWN VEHICLES	293	276	256	298	251	280	434
22. Pedal Cycles	55	47	46	42	63	61	53
23. Tramcars							
GRAND TOTAL	348	323	302	340	314	341	487
Pedestrians	22	24	45	38	16	42	87

NOTES :

Calculations by

**APPENDIX III - Road Traffic Act 1930. Fifth Schedule
(Section 122) - repealed enactments (32 No) and limits of speed**

Session and Chapter	Short Title	Extent of Repeal
2 and 3 Will. 4. c. 120	The Stage Carriage Act, 1832	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
3 and 4 Will. 4. c. 48	The London Hackney Carriages Act, 1833	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
5 and 6 Will. 4. c. 50	The Highways Act, 1835	Section seventy-six so far as it relates to motor vehicles and trailers.
5 and 6 Vict. c. 79	The Railway Passenger Duty Act, 1842	Sections thirteen to fifteen so far as they relate to public service vehicles.
6 and 7 Vict. c. 86	The London Hackney Carriage Act, 1843	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
10 and 11 Vict. c. 89	The Town Police Clauses Act, 1847	The provisions of the Act with respect to hackney carriages so far as they relate to public service vehicles.
13 and 14 Vict. c. 7	The London Hackney Carriage Act, 1850	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
16 and 17 Vict. c. 33	The London Hackney Carriage Act, 1853	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
16 and 17 Vict. c. 127	The London Hackney Carriage (No.2) Act, 1853	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
24 and 25 Vict. c. 70	The Locomotives Act, 1861	The whole Act, except sections one, two, ten and fourteen.
28 and 29 Vict. c. 83	The Locomotives Act, 1865	The whole Act, except sections nine, ten and thirteen.
32 and 33 Vict. c. 115	The Metropolitan Public Carriage Act, 1869	Section five so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
41 and 42 Vict. c. 51	The Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act, 1878	Section fifty-seven.
41 and 42 Vict. c. 58	The Locomotives (Amendment) (Scotland) Act, 1878	The whole Act.
41 and 42 Vict. c. 77	The Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act, 1878	Section twenty-three and Part II
51 and 52 Vict. c. 41	The Local Government Act, 1888	In section eighty-five the words from "and the following additional regulations" (so far as not repealed) to the end of the section.
52 and 53 Vict. c. 14	The Town Police Clauses Act, 1889	The whole Act so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
54 and 55 Vict. c. 63	The Highways and Bridges Act, 1891	Section four from "but no such order" to the end of the section.
55 and 56 Vict. c. 55	The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892	Sections two hundred and seventy, two hundred and seventy-one and two hundred and seventy-two so far as they relate to public service vehicles.
57 and 58 Vict. c. 37	The Locomotive Threshing Engines Act, 1894	The whole Act.
59 and 60 Vict. c. 36	The Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896	The whole Act.
60 and 61 Vict. c. 38	The Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897	Section sixty-five so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
61 and 62 Vict. c. 29	The Locomotives Act, 1898	The whole Act.

F. Llewellyn-Jones, *The Road Traffic Act (1930)*, Sweet and Maxwell (1931) 234

3 Edw. 7. c. 36	The Motor Car Act, 1903	The whole Act.
7 Edw. 7. c. 53	The Public Health Acts, Amendment Act, 1907	Section seventy-eight.
7 Edw. 7. c. 55	The London Cab and Stage Carriage Act, 1907	Section three so far as it relates to public service vehicles.
8 Edw. 7. c. 62	The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1908	Section thirteen so far as it relates to public service vehicles. Section twenty-four and subsections (1), (2), (5) and (6) of section twenty-five.
6 and 7 Geo. 5. c. 12	The Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916	Section eleven.
10 and 11 Geo. 5. c. 72	The Roads Act, 1920	Subsections (1) to (7) of section seven. Subsections (1) and (3) of section fourteen so far as they relate to public service vehicles. Sections fifteen and sixteen. The Second Schedule.
14 and 15 Geo. 5. c. 34	The London Traffic Act, 1924	Section nine.
15 and 16 Geo. 5. c. 71	The Public Health Act, 1925	Subsection (1) of section seventy-four.
15 and 16 Geo. 5. c. 86	The Criminal Justice Act, 1925	Section forty.

"LIMITS OF SPEED
Class of vehicle

	Maximum Speed – Miles per Hour
1. <i>Passenger Vehicles</i> , that is to say vehicles constructed solely for the carriage of passengers and their effects:-	
(1) If all the wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres and the vehicle is not drawing a trailer:-	
(a) if the vehicle is adapted to carry not more than seven passengers, exclusive of the driver and is not a heavy motor car or an invalid carriage	No limit
(b) if the vehicle is a heavy motor car or is adapted to carry more than seven passengers, exclusive of the driver	30
(c) In any other case, including invalid carriages	20
2. <i>Goods Vehicles</i> , that is to say vehicles constructed or adapted for use for the conveyance of goods or burden of any description:-	
(1) When not drawing a trailer-	
(a) Motor cars (a), if all the wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres; and	
(b) Heavy motor cars, constructed or adapted for the conveyance of horses and their attendants and used solely for that purpose, if all the wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres	30
(c) (i) Motor Cars, if all the wheels are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but are fitted with soft or elastic tyres; and	
(ii) Heavy motor cars, if all the wheels are fitted with pneumatic tyres	20
(d) Heavy motor cars, if all the wheels are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but are fitted with soft or elastic tyres	16
(2) When drawing a trailer -	
(a) if all the wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are fitted with pneumatic tyres, or if the trailer is attached to the drawing vehicle by partial superimposition in such manner as to cause a substantial part of the weight to be borne by the vehicle and all the wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are fitted with soft or elastic tyres	16
(b) if all the wheels both of the drawing vehicle and of the trailer are not fitted with pneumatic tyres but are fitted with soft or elastic tyres	8
(3) In any other case	5
3. <i>Locomotives and motor tractors</i> :-	
(1) Heavy locomotives-	
(a) Within any city, town or village	3
(b) Elsewhere	5

APPENDIX IV

Herefordshire Mobile Police Section

PC 65 G. Williams, who was based at Leominster, astride one of the first Sunbeam motor-cycles to be used for patrol duties, about 1931. It is understandable that he earned the nickname 'Speedy'



PC 65 G. Williams
Photographed
outside Wigmore
Police Station,
about 1935, with a
Morris 10 hp car,
used in the Leominster
Division

These four cars, two
Morris 10 hp and two
Rover 14 hp, were
purchases from
County
Motors, Hereford 1937



G Forrest and E Hadley Policing in Hereford and Leominster KAF Brewin (1989) 131

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