The Trojan Museum Trust

Patron Tim Schenken

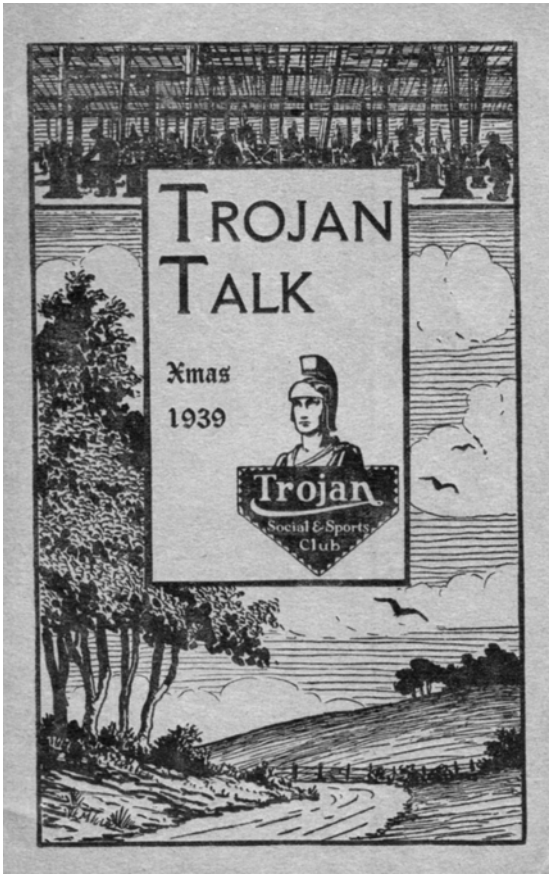
News Sheet No. 40
Winter 2025

Dear Friends,

Welcome to your winter news sheet, I hope that you are keeping warm through these cold months?

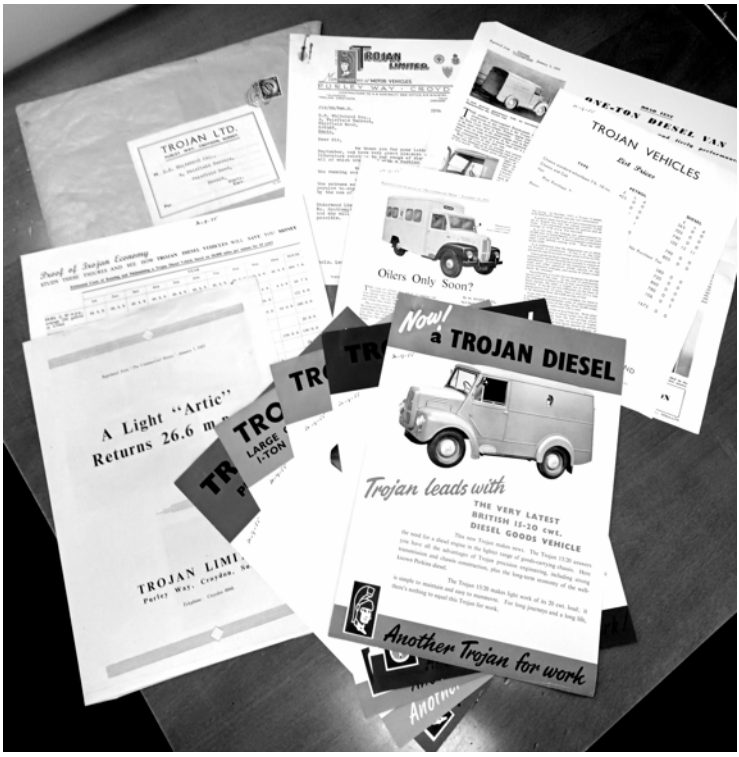
I've had some interesting enquiries over the past few months. One was from a group trying to plot all the bombs that fell on the Croydon and the surrounding area during the Second World War. They were confused as a bomb was reported falling close to the Trojan Sports ground which didn't tie up with other evidence they had. We solved the problem between us as they were assuming the sports ground to be close to the works when it was in fact some distance away beyond Croydon Airfield off Edgehill Road. We have limited details about the sports ground, we don't know if it was owned or leased by Trojan and at what point they ceased to own it or have use of it. We know that there was some sort of pavilion but again we don't have any photos of this building.

Trojan Sports Club Magazine



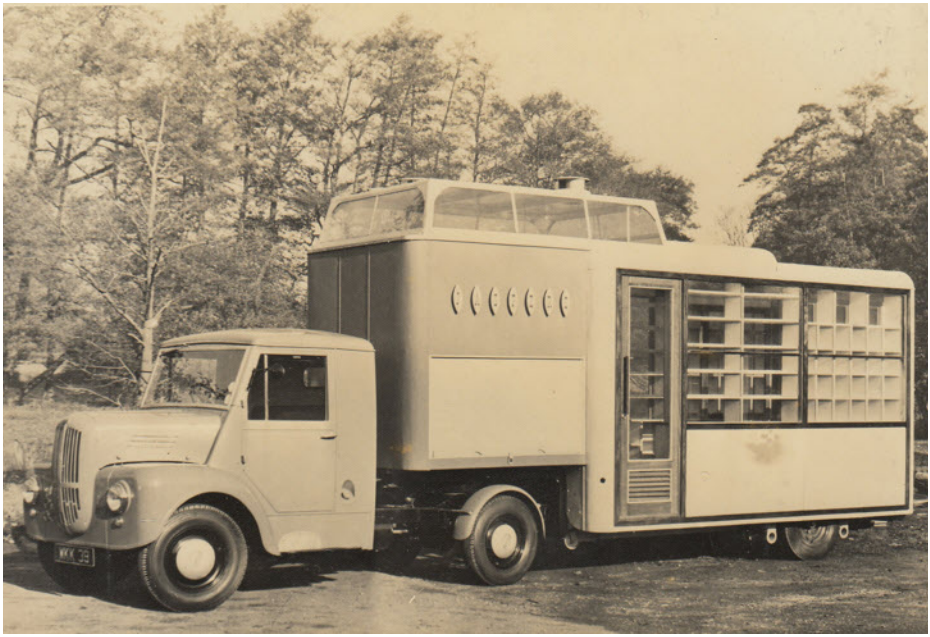
We've also had various correspondence with the Croydon Museum and archive based at the Clocktower in Croydon. They are currently running an exhibition 'Forge: Industries of Croydon' and feature Trojan. They have arranged for me to give a talk on January 22nd next year on all aspects of Trojan Ltd. and it's various products, which hopefully will help promote the Trust and perhaps bring a few more ex-employees to our attention.

They also have donated to the Trust an advertising pack which was sent out to a potential customer for their diesel vans in 1955. This gives us a great insight into Trojans marketing strategy at this time.



The pack included an advertising leaflet for the diesel articulated truck, which was made up of a Trojan tractor unit with a trailer made by Tasker Trailers. Sadly we know of no known survivors though a contact said there was one known about in the early 1980's but it is unlikely that this one has survived. Trojan offered a variety of trailer types in their advertising as well as featuring a custom made mobile shop, to show what

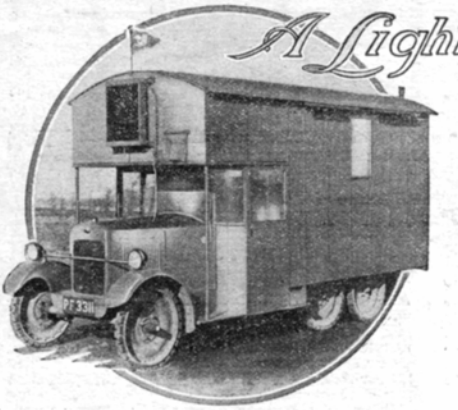
could be produced for the customer. Apart from photos we have very few details about this shop, I wonder where it operated?



Earlier Trojan did make a one off articulated truck using their post war two stroke van as the basis, but it is believed that only one prototype was made.

The artics were not the only six wheelers that Trojan produced, back in the late 1920's, firstly Leslie Hounsfield developed a solid tyred six wheeled camper van for his own personal use. Using it on holidays from 1927 onwards.

A Light Car Caravan-de-Lu



EXCLUSIVE DETAILS OF A RIGID SIX-WHEELED CARAVAN PRIVATELY OWNED AND DESIGNED. PRACTICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SOLUTIONS TO MANY PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VEHICLE OF THIS KIND.

(Left) The Trojan from the front. Note the extended canopy on which is mounted the condenser. (Right) From the rear, showing large window, flue pipe from stove, "larder" ventilator and—below number plate—signalling panel.

IN a quiet corner of the great Trojan works at Kingston we found Mr. and Mrs. Leslie H. Hounsfield "at home" in their rigid six-wheeled Trojan caravan.

"Step inside and make yourself comfortable," said Mr. Hounsfield, indicating one of the wide seats which run along the sides of the caravan. "Perhaps you had better take off your coat, for compared with the works it is, you will agree, comfortably warm in here," he added, and, opening a corner cupboard, he revealed the source of heat, a large circular wick paraffin stove with a flue-pipe going up the cupboard inside and projecting through the end of the caravan.

This system of heating not only provides an effective drying cupboard for clothes, but, owing to the large volume of air which circulates through this cupboard—which is open at the top and the bottom—by convection, the cabin is kept at a uniform temperature without the products of combustion actually entering the cabin itself.

We were then introduced to other details of a caravan which literally bristles with useful and ingenious features. In the opposite corner of the cabin there is a similar cupboard to that just described, provided with a number of shelves which are used for storing crockery, glass and tinned foods, a special shelf, by the way, being provided for eggs.

Between these corner cupboards and level with the bottom of the rear window there is a shelf carrying an aluminium tray where the "head chef" holds undisputed sway during the preparation of meals, and below this shelf there is a storage space for cooking utensils and stoves, the larder being one floor lower, as it were, and, incidentally, occupying a cool position admirably suited to the preservation of food.

The divans along each side are 6 ft. 3 ins. long, and they can be lifted in sections so as to provide access to roomy lockers for boots, additional camp beds, waterproofs, and so on. The floor of each locker in turn can be lifted, thus disclosing the rear wheels, together with springs and driving chains.

Locker Under the Floor.

Bearing in mind the difficulty of giving the caravan a sweep out—for one enters this novel vehicle by a door at the front within the driving compartment—provision had to be made for disposing easily of dust and sweepings. This is provided by a trap-door in the floor proper; when it is lifted sweepings can be shot straight out into the roadway beneath.

This trap-door is at the rear of the cabin; at the forward end there is another removable board which discloses a large under-floor locker giving ample space for pails, paraffin, oil and so on. High up above the seats are long shelves which are invaluable for the occupants' clothes when they have "turned in" for the night, the sleeping accommodation taking the form of stretcher beds, which are rolled up at the backs of the seats during the day-time, but unrolled and hitched to special brackets at night. The long, soft feather seat cushions are transferred to these beds and make admirable mattresses.

Very ingenious is the way in which the central rigid table is fixed up. It consists of an ordinary table top having a hole in the centre which passes over a central column, the latter having first been screwed into the floor. At the other end of this column are four arms—strangely reminiscent of a steering wheel! They provide adequate support for the table, which is held in position by an ingenious central clip when all is assembled. A narrow table board can be substituted for the dining board, and is convenient for cooking and so on, as it leaves room to pass up and down. Should the party be a large one, this narrow table board can be used as an extra seat bridged between the side seats; in fact, it is possible for six people quite comfortably to take their places at the table.

The question of ventilation has been studied very carefully. The larder, for example, has its own ventilator which is made waterproof, by an outside flap, whilst on each side of the caravan immediately beneath the eaves of the roof there are two longitudinal ventilators, a fifth being arranged at the back of the caravan and also under the roof; all are provided with adjustable flaps.

The lighting is, of course, by electricity, one central lamp being sufficient for the interior proper, a second being arranged over the door communicating with the

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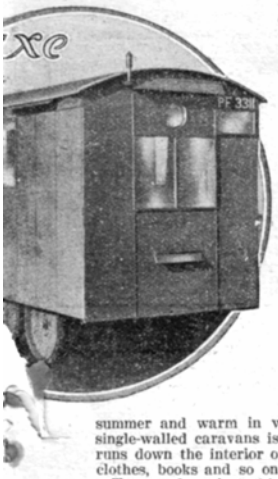


driver's cabin and a third being an ordinary tail lamp which, of course, is inside the car, and of which more will be said when it comes to describe the actual control of the vehicle.

Mr. Hounsfield pays every credit to his wife for the practical assistance she gave him in scheming the interior arrangements, and the success which has attended their efforts goes to prove that two heads are certainly better than one.

A point which the designer—and, incidentally, the builder—of the caravan emphasized is the importance of having double walls. These, he points out, are usually considered desirable because they make the cabin cool in summer and warm in winter. The real bugbear of single-walled caravans is internal condensation, which runs down the interior of the walls, wetting cushions, clothes, books and so on.

To guard against this, the caravan under review is a real double-walled type; that is to say, the skeleton framework is covered on the inside with oak veneered three-ply, oil-stained and furniture polished, whilst over the outside is stretched proofed canvas, an inch space being allowed between the interior and exterior lining. The hollow wall is open both at the top and the bottom, so as to promote proper ventilation.

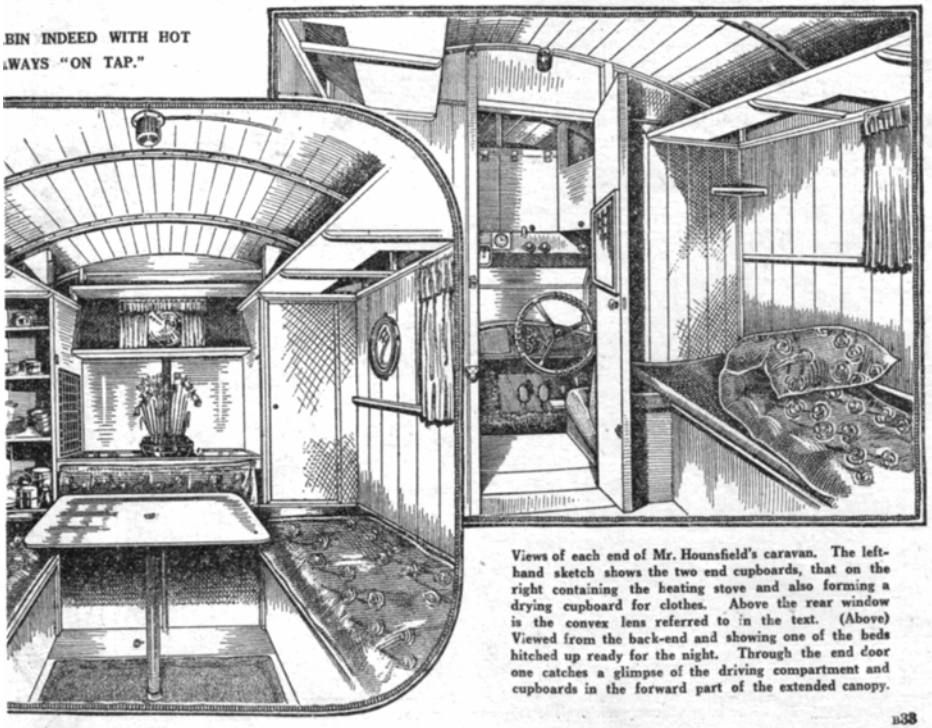
To guard against the effects of condensation on the windows the interior sills are drained. Incidentally, the windows are unopenable, for this was considered to be the only way of making them really storm-proof, bearing in mind that a leaky window means damp bedding. Needless to say, the interior is furnished with knick-knacks inseparable from caravan life.

Practical Considerations.

Turning now to practical considerations which affect the control of the vehicle, it will be observed that the driving compartment is not only large, but is storm-proof, so much so that the long driver's seat can be used as an extra bed should an unexpected visitor turn up. In the day-time three passengers can be accommodated quite comfortably on this seat. The controls are, of course, of the standard Trojan pattern, but with a view to the comfort, convenience and safety of other road users there is a signalling device immediately below the rear number plate, which, by means of suitable switches in the driving compartment, illuminates a large arrow pointing to the right, or, alternatively, the word "overtake," which is written in sufficiently large characters to be seen quite easily by a following driver.

As we have already mentioned, the lamp for the back number plate illuminates the inside of the roof

BIN INDEED WITH HOT
AWAYS "ON TAP."



Views of each end of Mr. Hounsfield's caravan. The left-hand sketch shows the two end cupboards, that on the right containing the heating stove and also forming a drying cupboard for clothes. Above the rear window is the convex lens referred to in the text. (Above) Viewed from the back-end and showing one of the beds hitched up ready for the night. Through the end door one catches a glimpse of the driving compartment and cupboards in the forward part of the extended canopy.

and thereby enables the driver to make sure that it is alight by merely glancing in the central driving mirror. Owing to the large rear window and to the fact that glass is used in the dividing door between the cabin and the driving compartment, a glance in the mirror also serves to give an excellent view of the road behind.

Immediately above the rear window, by the way, there is a small circular window which is really a large lens. Seated in the forward part of the cabin and glancing at this lens, one obtains a comprehensive view of the country, as one might see a reflection in a convex mirror.

It will be observed that the roof of the caravan is extended, as it were, over the driving compartment. This adds to the general lines of the caravan and also provides four large cupboards for storing bedding, extra clothes, clean linen, towels and so on; it is, in fact, a "linen cupboard" on the most modern lines, for it is kept aired by a hot water tank, the function of which may now briefly be described.

From the front view of the caravan it will be seen that there is what looks like an auxiliary radiator high up on the canopy. This, however, is really a condenser which is connected to the radiator of the car by a pipe which passes through the hot-water tank in the canopy. The ordinary overflow pipe in the radiator proper may be closed so that steam must pass up the pipe, through the fresh-water tank and into the condenser. The condensing action is efficient and the water returns once more to the radiator by means of a return pipe, surplus steam escaping from a vent in the upper part of the condenser.

Hot Water in an Hour.

It should be explained that the pipe is enlarged where it passes through the fresh-water tank so that ample heating surface is provided, and this works so successfully that after the car has been running for an hour or so hot water can be drawn off and requires merely to be brought up to the boil for making tea and so on.

The capacity of the fresh-water tank is 3 gallons; it is replenished by lifting the canvas flap on the front of the canopy and removing an accessible cap. There is no objection to the water in the radiator being allowed to boil—in fact, in cool weather the radiator is screened in order to promote ebullition.

On the left-hand step just behind the door there is a ventilated battery box, whilst the right-hand step houses a tent outfit in a special metal box.

In conclusion, we may pass on a few practical hints which Mr. Hounsfield has jotted down as the result of a long but pleasant experience.

An unbroken roof is essential, for if holes are made for ventilators, lantern tops or flue-pipes, they are rarely storm-proof. The interior electric light should show through the fixed windows and not through open ventilators, otherwise moths and so on quickly find their way into the cabin. The road springs should be exceptionally flexible—a period of about 70 vibrations a minute is recommended—so that even with solid tyres glass and china do not have to be wrapped up or carefully packed when the caravan is on the move.

Pros and Cons of Six Wheels.

The rigid six-wheeler (compared with a trailer) scores, in Mr. Hounsfield's opinion, because it can be easily backed or turned round without uncoupling and man-handling, whilst it is much safer for the driver and for other road users in narrow lanes.

On the question of gear ratios a rigid six-wheeler can be designed for the work it has to do, but when a car has to tow a trailer the gears are seldom suitable for the load. Unless all rear wheels are driving the six-wheeler has one disadvantage, namely, the tendency for wheel-spin to be set up on greasy surfaces.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the conversion from a four to a six-wheeler was carried out by extending the chassis and mounting the road wheels at the opposite ends of two long inverted semi-elliptic springs with torque members between the axles in order to take brake torque. The forward pair of wheels is driven in the ordinary way by a chain and, in fact, is in the usual position occupied by the Trojan rear axle. The third axle is coupled to the middle axle with another chain, so that all four rear wheels drive. With this caravan it is easy to average about 18 m.p.h. and to attain a speed of about 25 m.p.h.

It is not surprising that Mr. Hounsfield, the original designer of the thoroughly unorthodox but successful Trojan car, should design a caravan equally unorthodox but, unquestionably, just as successful. His novel "home on wheels" should act as a stimulus to that vast band of motorists which has an unshaken belief in caravanning.

CAMP AND CARAVAN. — **The caravan has been used for three summer holidays and several winter and other trips. The photo shows a typical camp scene. The reproduction above was enlarged from an ordinary V.P.K. print.**

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Inside the Camper Van

Trojan then developed this idea to produce a Six wheeled half-track vehicle, with the idea of selling them to the army. Two were produced and extensively tested over the course of a year by the British army, but in the end they returned the vehicles and decided not to place an order. They were fairly unique as the track was designed to run around conventional tyres, so allowing it to be removed for road use.

There was a rumour that the South African army placed a large order for these vehicles, but after extensive research through museums in South Africa, we had to conclude that this was just a rumour and no order was ever placed. Later we followed up on a tip off that one of the two vehicles had been buried in a sand pit on a farm in Somerset during the war, but again research found this rumour to be groundless. So we do not know what became of the army six wheelers or indeed Hounsfield's camper van, though again a rumour suggests that the camper van was dismantled to construct the first army six wheeler. An attempt was made by a chap in New Zealand, a few years ago, to make a copy of a six wheeler, but we believe he never finished the project. It would be near impossible to accurately copy a six wheeler as they had unique gear boxes allowing a large range of gears to be selected.

THE NEW TROJAN SIX-WHEELER

Trojan, Ltd., of Croydon, have just brought out a six-wheeler for use on roads and across country. The accompanying illustrations demonstrate very clearly what the new vehicle can do, and do with ease, under unpleasant conditions of weather and gradient.

The engine is of 10 h.p. Treasury rating and despite the small size and low gear of 48 to 1, it was evident to participants in recent tests on the Sussex Downs that the Trojan Company had produced a really serviceable vehicle for which many uses will quickly be found. With ease the new vehicle descended a grassy bank, having a gradient of nearly 1 in 2, crossed a rough cart track and at once climbed the opposite bank, of similar gradient. After an easy stretch of 1 in 4 rise the steady ascent of Blackcap was undertaken and completed without a hitch, although in parts the gradient became even harder than 1 in 2. The descent, without ballast, was more difficult, partly owing to the steadily-falling rain which made the turf very slippery, but after skilfully avoiding disaster near the edge of a deep chalk pit, the vehicle and driver reached comparative safety and were welcomed as they deserved.

With tracks fitted and a cargo of passengers, the performance was repeated, through weather conditions which continued to get worse, and over wet grass and treacherous chalk.

Later, on the beach at Newhaven, the vehicle succeeded admirably in travelling over loose shingle so piled as to present an impenetrable obstacle to any ordinary vehicle. The Trojan was excellently manœuvred and made steady progress in any desired direction.

In other tests, we are informed, watersplashes 18 inches deep have been taken, soft sand almost axle deep has been negotiated, and bog-land has been traversed without difficulty and without any overheating of the engine.

The design contains a number of features of intense interest, but especially noteworthy from the point of view of "Transport Management's" readers are the efficient performance of difficult tasks, and the price (£390, with complete tool-kit and all extras except the steel chain tracks).

Thank you to Allan Bedford who has sent in many brilliant photos all of which feature a Trojan vehicle, these are great to have in our archive.
One of which is the photo below which was taken in the 1920's in Colchester. The Trojan is part of a parade and is dressed up to illustrate the then well known book 'Mehalah: a Story of the Salt Marshes' by Sabine Baring-Gould, which is set on Mersea Island Essex, just outside Colchester.

Thank you to all of you have sent in items and pictures over the past few months they really help to build up our archive.
I hope that you have a lovely Christmas and New Year, and do please get in touch with any Trojan queries or memories.

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