

# Foreword

by Michael Farr

Our transport pioneers needed to use their limited experience, some intuition and a great deal of initiative to provide vehicles which no longer needed animals (or humans) to haul them. No doubt their main concern was to prevent the boiler exploding or the wheels disintegrating as they rolled over the rough and rutted tracks which served as the main roads joining communities with towns and cities.

It is not surprising that our engineers did not concern themselves with what we must today call »revenue control« – the collecting of passenger fares and policing of their proper use. It fell to a handful of the most surprising people to develop the rudiments of this control. The two who usually come to mind first are Lancashire Quaker Thomas Edmondson and American Walter Rathbone Bacon. Edmondson pioneered his card ticket system; Bacon introduced the Bell Punch apparatus, so beloved of early road operators.

In those far-off days Britain led the world in public transport know-how and just as George Stephenson was called upon to survey railways and recommend motive power for lines across the world, the new operators took up the tried and tested Edmondson card system – with, in 1841, the Paris and Rouen Railway leading the way in mainland-Europe.

Gordon has gathered together a fantastic selection of tickets of many types and from the widest range of countries featured in any book. I am struck by the fact that the proven systems, almost all using pre-printed tickets of paper or card, served travellers for more than 130 years. The Germans pioneered machines – *AEG* and *Pautze* for example – but the pre-printed ticket soldiered with little opposition on through two world wars and for another twenty five years of peace.

By comparison mechanization of ticket issue has developed by leaps and bounds over the past thirty or forty years, accountancy and printing systems becoming more sophisticated and efficient as microprocessors have become faster and more reliable.

Thus varieties of train or bus tickets hardly changed, save for the titles of new operators who absorbed the small companies, from the 1840s until the late 1970s. As Gordon relates and illustrates, since then there has been a myriad of machines, formats and processes.

So, who is going to use this comprehensive book? It is indeed a true labour of love and the latest product from a stable which began with the issue of informative pamphlets meticulously printed with a basic duplicator and sought after by his many friends in the collecting »business«. Modern printing techniques have not only enabled the true colours of tickets to be reproduced in what is inevitably a book of which only a limited number is likely to be produced, but they allow this to be achieved economically.

I suspect that many of us will use it frequently as a reference base for our ticket collections and acquisitions, particularly where the wording appears in an unfamiliar script. Others may wish to compare those beautiful illustrations with specimens in their own collections. I, and a small band of people who have tried to keep traditional ticketing alive by producing replicas using small hand-operated printing machines, will find it an invaluable source of reference. It will allow us to match type styles and layouts with renewed accuracy when asked to provide tickets for anniversaries or other special events of a particular transport operator.

And if none of these applies to you, I suggest you keep it to grace your coffee table, so when you wish to relax you can thumb through its pages – perhaps to plan new excursions or to recall old ones.

Many people feel the modern computer-generated ticket is boring. Gordon's welcome volume will help to keep alive the memory of the many colourful slips of paper and card which for someone were a passport to a voyage of discovery. Join me in wallowing in nostalgia and ensuring that ticket collecting stays alive and well for future generations to enjoy.