

T²M Newsletter

International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility



T2M founded

On Wednesday, 20 June 2007 (for later historians: at 5.43 pm sharp), president Gijs Mom signs the T2M statutes in the office of notary Mr. Peter Blokland in Tilburg, The Netherlands, on behalf of all Executive Committee members in absentiae mentioned in the official document. Mr. Blokland is a collector of miniature car models (for the connoisseurs, 'H0' models).

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EDITORIAL

Executive Committee Nominations Needed

T2M is pleased to announce its official call for nominations for election to the Executive Committee. This is an important opportunity for members to take part in the running of and future direction of the organization.

A strong organization needs a dynamic Executive Board and members are therefore encouraged to nominate either themselves, or suitable colleagues.

As explained in the previous newsletter, there will be TWO Executive Committee elections. Up to FOUR full-time places (four years) and TWO student places (two-years) are vacant. Doctoral candidates must

apply for the student positions. There are no rules against current members standing again in these elections. To apply, please send the following to Drew Whitelegg, Chair, Election Committee, at awhitel@learnlink.emory.edu:

A short biography or statement saying how you would like to contribute to T2M's Executive Committee: A short CV, a picture.

Nominations for the EC elections close on September 31, 2007. Materials will then be made available for members to vote on candidates up to the Annual Meeting in Helmond.

NB - the Executive Committee elections are entirely separate to the Presidential election. More information and the official call for nominations for President will be made later in the summer.

T²M 2007 REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Fifth Annual Conference of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic & Mobility



*HELMOND, THE NETHERLANDS
(1.5 hours from Amsterdam via train)
25 – 28 October 2007*

Victoria de Grazia and David Gartman keynote speakers



The registration for the fifth jubilee annual T2M conference is now open. We have not only prepared a conference with more than 90 presentations, but also a Mobile Heritage Event on Thursday afternoon, 25 October, just before the official opening of the conference, and a Design Day on Saturday, 27 October, partly coinciding with the conference itself. Also, we have designed a full social program for your partner, including a trip to Amsterdam on Saturday. On Friday afternoon we have organized three parallel excursions to Leuven, Belgium (Railway Heritage), Lelystad in the Flevopolder (Aviation museum) and Helmond (Helmond, Heritage and Architecture).

The culmination of all jubilee activities will be the banquet, held on Saturday evening, where not only the winners of the several T2M awards and prizes will be announced, and the location of next year's conference will be revealed, but where you also will be witness to T2M's traditional surprise event.

Please register before September 1st at the latest.

For more information about the conference or registration, please go to <http://www.t2m.org/conference>

President's Page

T²M Founded

It is not a coincidence that our fifth jubilee conference will take place about 15 km from where T2M was founded in November 2003. The executive committee decided three years ago to return to where T2M's cradle stood and, at the fifth event, look the fledgling hybrid in the face and ask ourselves where it now stands, and where it should go.

Quite a lot of labour has been done since then. I am not going to repeat my earlier short lists of accomplishments (and failures) here, but it can be boiled down to an assessment that the T2M initiative responded to a latent need among transport, mobility and tourism historians to have a platform for intellectual exchange and encounter. For the fifth time now, we have a large number of abstract submissions (more than 90) and if you look at T2M's website, you will find a lot of arguments why, this time, you should bring your partner as well.

Here in the Netherlands, we are very busy. With the help of several EC committees, we have been organising the conference program, the excursions on Friday, the Mobility Heritage Event on Thursday, the Design Event and the banquet on Saturday, and a special wrap-up final plenary session on Sunday. The latter, following special requests from several PhD members, will follow the excellent example set in Paris by Vanessa Schwarz and Vincent Kaufmann, who acted as guides for us all regarding the 'lessons to be learnt' from the previous conference sessions. This year, the design his-

torian Penny Sparke will do the wrap-up, and we are still looking for a colleague-expert on heritage.

More good news: We just heard that we got the funding (84,000 Euros from the Eindhoven regional authorities!) for the Design Event, which means that you will be able to witness the results of one year of hard work by dozens of students from the design schools of the three Dutch technical universities and of the Design Academy in Eindhoven on car interiors, while you also will be able to attend the

special plenary session on Saturday dedicated to the History of Mobility, Interior Design and Gendering where train and ship interiors will be dealt with equally. During this session we will experiment with one of the main issues of our policy, namely to bring historians and non-historians (in this case: designers and engineers) together in order to investigate the relations between history and current-day issues, and find ways to revise our theoretical concepts as well as expand our field.

The Heritage Event on Thursday



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afternoon, just before the official opening of the conference, will be dedicated to the launch of the Dutch Virtual Mobility Museum (VMM) developed by the ECMD in cooperation with the mobile heritage community in the Netherlands, funded by the three large Dutch cultural funds and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Education. We will benefit from your presence in the Netherlands, especially those of you affiliated to

museums and heritage in general, to discuss the possibilities of 'going Europe' as a first step towards a global VMM. We hope that this event will result in the founding of a consortium of interested international parties who are willing to cooperate in building such an international virtual museum. As the future VMM will also contain a Study Room, a Forum and other parts where transport and mobility historians could contribute, you are

cordially invited to take part in the discussions (please let us know whether you intend to attend, so we can choose a proper meeting room and make sure that you have some tea and coffee).

I cannot wait for the end of October to come (and take some rest afterwards...).

Gijs Mom

In The Spotlight

Garth Wilson

1 - How did you become interested in transport?

The origins of my interest in transport history date back to an undergraduate and admittedly rather deterministic-desire to understand how the evolution of transport technologies, particularly shipping, influenced larger patterns of economic and social history in the ancient and medieval world. I then consolidated that interest as a graduate student, first in Canada and then in Denmark. My path from there to becoming the curator of a national transportation collection has certainly involved various unexpected, though not unwelcome, turns and diversions. On the other hand, my original instinct to link transport to larger historical issues has, I hope, always served me well.



2 - Is there a distinctive "Canadian" approach to transport history and, if so, could you enlighten us?

The question of a Canadian approach to transport history is an interesting one. It is arguably a feature of the collective Canadian consciousness to be preoccupied with overcoming distance, the country being what it is, and a great deal of thought and energy, in various spheres, has been, and continues to be, devoted to the problem. One of the enduring foundation myths of Canada as a federal state, concerns the building of the transcontinental railway

(CPR) as part and parcel of the nation-building vision of the Fathers of Confederation. The great Canadian contribution to historiography is, of course, the Staples Thesis (or Theory) of Harold Innis and W.A. Mackintosh. For Innis especially, one of the most important components of the Staples Thesis was transportation. The fact that Innis later became preoccupied with communications and media serves, I think, to underline a concern with the systems

that link people and facilitate exchange. Viewed from this perspective, T2M's ongoing collective exploration of the concept of mobility evolving out of transportation, strikes me as being somehow akin to this, but that remains to be seen.

3 - Equally, do Canadians approach museums in a different way to the rest of the world?

In Canada, as elsewhere, museums are living through what a colleague from London's Science Museum, Robert Bud, once aptly referred to as "a Weimar moment." However, to focus on the national question, the tradition of Canadian Museums is not so much different from that elsewhere in the world, as it is notably different from that of our American neighbours to the south; that is Canadian museums have traditionally been overwhelmingly publicly founded and funded. This has had a significant impact on the particular history and evolution of museums in Canada and, more to the point, on the way in which they are perceived or approached by Canadians—that is, as fundamentally public institutions. The implications of this are greater than they might appear. At present, this tradition is at the forefront of a debate about—no surprise—funding, with the winds blowing in the direction of cultivating a culture of greater private support through tax policy incentive, rather than further direct funding. The great American tradition of philanthropy is the one being touted now. In addition to this, history museums here are also wrestling with the broad demographic changes that increasingly define Canada, changes generating important professional discussions about the stories we tell and the audiences (public) we serve. Watching all this unfold among transport museums over the last twenty years has been a source of both concern and fascination—these are interesting times, very much in accordance with the venerable Chinese saying.

4 - What developments would you like to see in your field over the next few years?

Defining my field as one that bridges both transport history and heritage—following David Lowenthal's distinction—I am among those who would like to see an increased emphasis on what has been called the cultural turn. I feel there remains much promise in this. Being involved with museums of science, technology

and transportation greatly enhances one's awareness of just how persistent and pervasive the whiggish perspective is, both in the stories museums tell and, in fact, among a significant portion of the visiting public. I do think things are beginning to change in interesting ways, but I am still continually struck by how oddly reluctant, or even embarrassed, people, including museum professionals, seem to be about recognizing the full cultural dimension of technology. The dynamic is somewhat different in the academy, but I still find much to recommend the observations and ideas put forward in Gijs Mom's Fiftieth Anniversary review of the field in the Sept. 2003 edition of the JTH. I like to think that T2M, is, at its best, a very good vehicle to carry us forward—pardon the transport metaphor.

5 - What do you consider T2M's strengths? And what could do with improvement?

The great strength and appeal of T2M is, in my opinion, its multidisciplinary and ecumenical nature. This is most apparent in its ongoing efforts to redefine transportation history. I find this "work in progress" quality very exciting. I also admire the ongoing use of conference themes to explore possible relationships and connections to other fields, as well as the sincere efforts being made to attract and to include graduate students. Having said that, I am also, as someone with a background in maritime history, very conscious of the relative absence in T2M of scholars with a special interest in shipping and seafaring. This probably may well say more about maritime historians than T2M, but the situation still needs to be seriously addressed; otherwise our organization will end up being like a chair missing a leg. Similarly, I would like to see more museum curators and public historians brought into the fold; we remain too few—and far-between at present. This is necessary, I would argue, first and foremost because they often bring with them observations and ideas

drawn from important non-verbal documents of the past (material culture), but also because they tend to provide a healthy dose of concern for public engagement. It has always seemed to me an enrichment of any scholarly endeavour to ask whether or not, and if so how, our ideas and insights are reaching the wider world of John Q. Public, as well as pundits and policy makers.

6 - T2M is coming to Ottawa - any advice at this stage on what members can expect?

The theme for the 2008 conference in Ottawa is Mobility and the Environment. Our reading of the theme includes both those topical and pressing questions surrounding the historical relationship between mobility and the environment, but also concerns issues related to overcoming geography and climate. We see this theme as providing an ideal context to explore common interests and approaches among historians of transport, traffic and mobility, together with geographers and environmental historians. Another major aspiration for 2008 is to bring more North American's into the fold. Local arrangement planning has begun and we do hope to be in a position to encourage early registration. We know that we are unlikely to be able to match the great sponsorship success of the Paris Conference, so a good turn out and early commitments will be important in terms of the cost and range of events offered. We are looking at dates in mid-September, so the weather will likely be very pleasant and, we hope, allow us to enjoy some activities outdoors—a fitting prospect given the theme. So, my only real advice, which I trust will be conveyed and repeated by all with an interest in T2M is simply this: register early and register often!

CARTOONS

PAUL Van HEESVELDE DELVES INTO THE WORLD OF CARTOONS AND COMES UP LAUGHING.

In the former newsletter, we forgot to mention the copyright for the article on comics Paul Van Heesvelde was writing. Our apologies to the copyright holder. We add here the copyrights: © 2007 Standaard Uitgeverij Antwerpen - België and thank Standaard Uitgeverij for the use of the pictures

I've been driving all night, my hand's wet on the wheel There's a voice in my head, that drives me heel It's my baby callin', says I need you here And it's half past four and I'm shifting gear The opening of Radar Love by the Dutch band Golden Earring, driving all night and the hands wet on the wheel was for me almost a daily experience for five years. I started as a young coach driver to earn enough money to pay for my studies at Brussels University. But long before I became a driver, Santa Claus brought me comics that still have an effect on me. It was the beginning of a lifetime interest in transport, traffic and mobility. The series were drawn by Jean Graton, who was born in Nantes. Before turning to comics, Graton worked as an industrial designer, an advertising artist and as a sports illustrator for a press agency. His first actual comics were episodes of the historical 'Belles Histoires de l'Oncle Paul' series in Spirou from 1952 to 1954. He then joined Tintin magazine, for which he drew several short stories, mainly about sports. It was 1957 when he created his most famous character, the formula 1 driver 'Michel Vaillant'. Vaillante is a family-run French business which, in the beginning, is a transportation company. They also create their own trucks and cars and decide to enter Formula 1. In the following seventy plus adventures, Michel Vaillant and the Vaillante race team compete in numerous races in Formula 1 and other driving competitions. (see also http://lambiek.net/artists/g/graton_j.htm) Michel is the main driver, his habitual

team-mate being American Steve Warson. The team is managed by Michel's older brother Jean-Pierre. The company president is their father, Henri. The comic is notable for featuring real-life motor racing figures, including drivers like Jackie Stewart and Alain Prost and teams like Ferrari or Williams. Michel himself is often seen being interviewed by real-life journalist Gérard "Jabby" Crombac. This series brings a very good insight view of different aspects of car racing and motor sports. But this might be a topic for another Newsletter. The album that made the greatest impres-

sion to me is atypical, because it deals with freight traffic: Tocht door de nacht (Route de nuit/Trip trough the night). The title of this comic is also the title of a radio program by Roland Dhordain. In reality, Roland Dhordain was the founding father of Inter-Service-Route (see: <http://www.radiofrance.fr/rf/musee/histoire/bio.php>) and he also added best practices for drivers or advice for a better road safety to the radio program featured in the comics. For instance, one piece of advice was "Whenever you overtake a cyclist, be aware to leave enough space to

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fall; this was an advise of Roland Dhor-dain; And now a nice piece of music by...". The problem of blind spot mirrors and road haulage makes this advice pertinent, although the radio style of the early sixties does not exist anymore. The story deals with Benjamin Vaillant, Michel's uncle who is CEO of a transport firm. He asks Michel to keep an eye

on Yves Douléac, a young orphan who used to work for Uncle Ben, but suddenly left Ben to go to work for a competing firm. Ben made a promise the day Yves' father died in a road accident at the wheel of a Vaillant truck. Yves is moving to slippery ground and Michel will try to get Yves back. The young man gets

caught in a smuggling affair and the truck drivers organise a trip through the night to catch the organiser and the 'capo' of the smuggling gang. The comic is very interesting for the technical information it brings to younger people, although the technology is more or less archaic, these days. In the following drawings, Michel Vail-



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lant, the Formula 1 racer is explaining to his colleague Steve Warson the functioning of the gearbox of a Vaillante Truck, with a relais doubling the number of gears and the retarder, a magnetic brake with impact on the crankshaft.

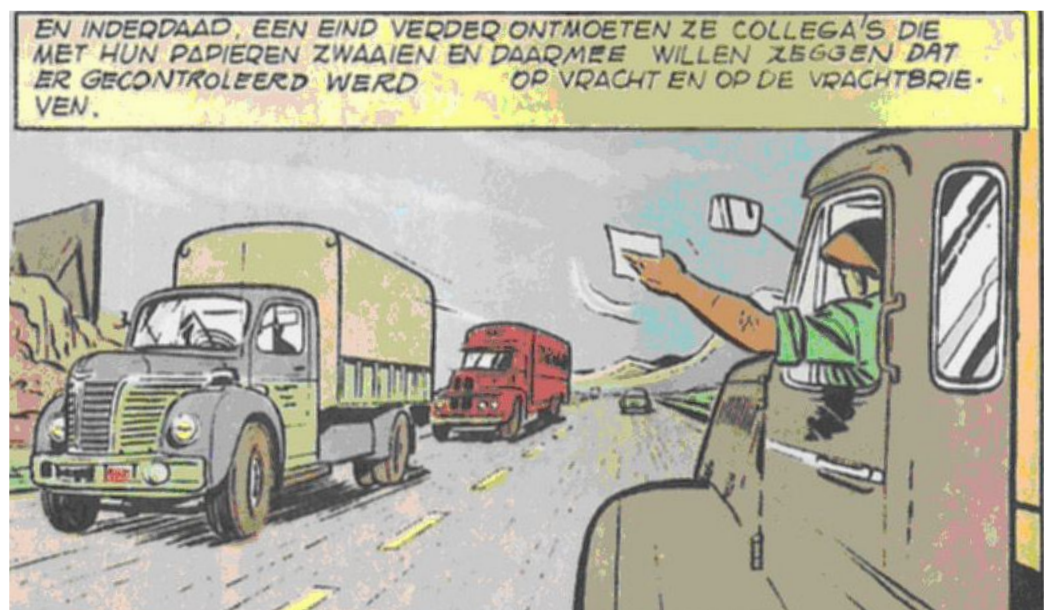
the consignment note is going on. This comic fits very well in the French tradition of movies on freight transport, featuring Jean Gabin at the wheel of a road truck. It is not possible to make a reconstruction of the rich history of road haulage, but at least this comic brings a complete menu for topics for future transport research on mobility culture.

Special thanks to Graton Editeur to allow us the use of this images for this T²M newsletter

Paul VAN HEESVELDE

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But the technical side is largely surpassed by the important information on the social behaviour, working hours, group dynamics and ritual acts to prevent colleagues getting stopped by traffic police traffic. In the early sixties, freight drivers still have radio programs during the night and restaurants where they gather and meet at noon. The next picture shows a driver showing his papers and documents while meeting a colleague. He warns other drivers that a control of the cargo and



About this Newsletter

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