

## Federated Malay States Railways.

### Road Motor Services 1910.

The following is an abstract from an article published in Commercial Motor magazine in 1910 written by Mr. A.E.Maeden, several years engineer in charge of the motor vehicles organization within the Railway Department , and from photographs from 'Uncle Howard's' album .

The fleet comprised a mixture of charabancs, lorries and mail-cum-passenger vans and in early 1910 comprised the following makes of vehicles:

23 Milnes-Daimler.

3 Thornycroft.

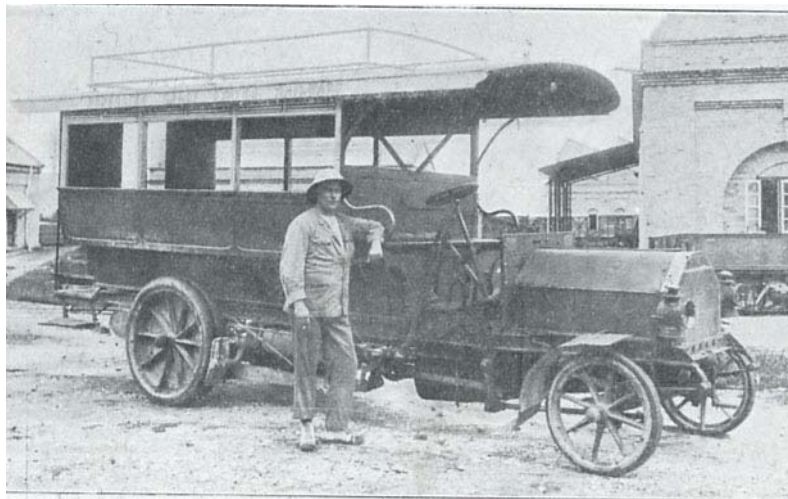
6 Straker-Squire.

11 Albion.

1 Halley.

1 Crossley-Leyland.

( See notes at end for further information on these vehicles).



A.E.Maeden with one of the early type Milnes-Daimlers.

In 1885 much of the States (now brought together under Federated Malay States) were still virgin jungle and it was relied upon the civil servants of the Colonial Office to bring the country to its present position of prosperity, much of this being made possible by the Railway Department.

The help of motor road haulage has been extensive in order to develop districts remote from the permanent way. A large and far reaching service of motor mail wagons and motor buses has been in operation since 1906.

Initial service was opened in December between Tapah and Tapah Road station, a junction on the main line to Penang. The vehicles used on this service are two Milnes-Daimler 18 h.p. omnibuses with seating for 18 third class and 5 first class passengers, three whom sit in a compartment behind the driver and two besides the driver. Malay native men are quite suitable for work as drivers. The following January a second service was started a few miles further north between Temoh station on the main line and Chenderiang, a mining town some 8 miles east. Three more Milnes-Daimlers

similar are used on this service. This service is a very good revenue earner especially at Chinese feast and festival times.

In June 1907 a service was started along the 28 miles of good road between Klang station on the Port Swettenham to Kuala Lumpur line to Kuala Selangor, a route bordered by many miles of rubber estates. The service started with 18 h.p. Milnes-Daimlers but soon these proved to be too small and were substituted with larger 28 / 32 h.p. models fitted with 35 seat charabanc style bodies of angle iron construction with garden seats and long canopies etc. built at central railway workshops.

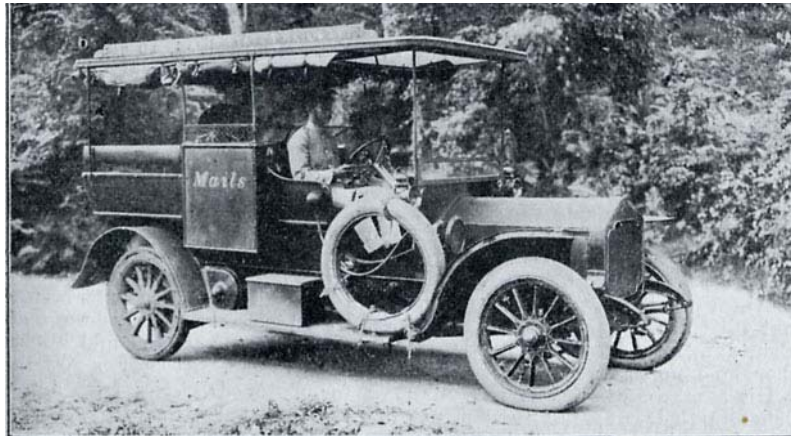


Albion mail car and Milnes-Daimler lorry on a typical section of the Pahang trunk road.

The largest state being that of Pahang is separated from other states by a long range of hills rising in places to 6000 / 7000 feet. The range is crossed by the Pahang trunk road starting from Kuala Kubu ( Selangor) on the main line to Penang, the highest point being the Semankok pass at 2700 feet, with average gradients of 1 : 30 for some 21 miles to the gap and later at Trantum. Many sharp curves, deep chasms and high jungle add to the interest of the terrain. On this road a comprehensive service of motor mail-cars and motorbuses was commenced on 1<sup>st</sup>. September 1907. The vehicles used were four 16 h.p. Albion wagonettes with seating for five first class passengers and three 18 h.p. Milnes-Daimler omnibuses with seating for eighteen third class and two first class passengers.



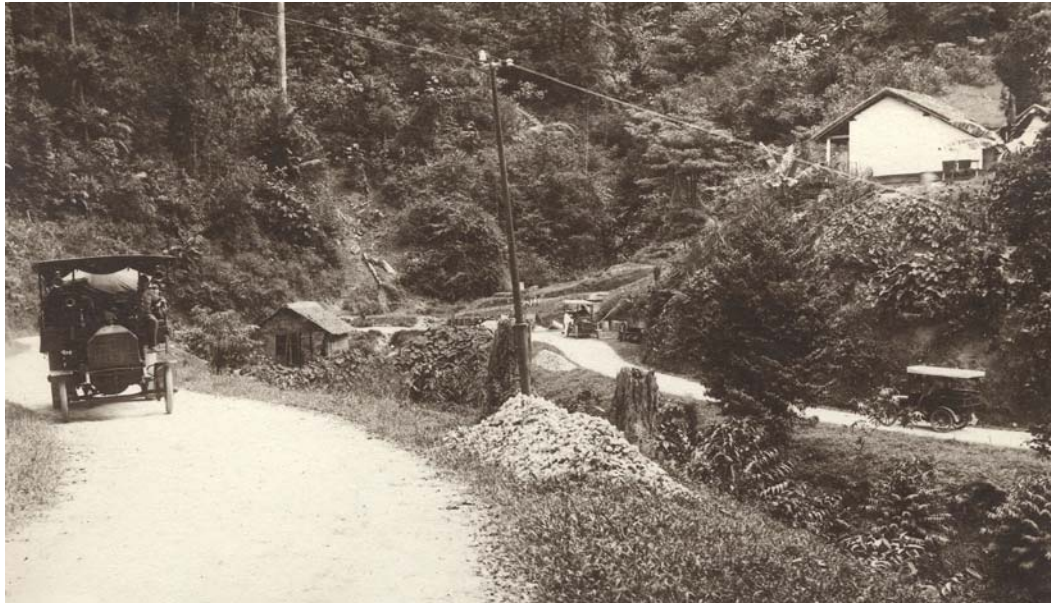
24 h.p. Albion no. 43 in full flight on the Pahang trunk road .



18 h.p. Albion mail car.

The Albions carried the mail and did one trip each way per day. Passengers were picked up at three stations en route, The Gap, Tranum and Tras. A regular timetable was put into operation with the crossing of vehicles at special safe places . From Ruab to Kuala Lipis about 40 miles, this is some 83 miles from the railway and a service of one trip each way per day has been started with an 18 h.p. Milnes-Daimler.





Milnes-Daimler and Albions on the Kuala-Kubu-Raub route.

The mining town of Bentong also has also been linked with a service to Raub with connections with the Kuala Kubu mail-cars and buses at Trinum. These connections with the main line at Kuala Kubu has allowed passengers from Kuala Lipis, Raub, and Bentong to proceed to Kuala Lumpur in one day. The 18 h.p. buses have found to be underpowered for the hill sections and have been replaced with three 30 / 40 h.p. Straker- Squire charabancs seating 25 passengers.



30 / 40 h.p. Straker-Squire no. R 25 on the Pahang trunk road.

These vehicles average 10 mph. on this arduous road. The mail service in addition has two 24 h.p. Albions working on it ,these having a lockable mail compartment and

seating for 5 first class passengers constructed at the Central Workshops. A motor lorry service on this route was initiated in October 1909 using the 22 h.p. and three 28 h.p. Milnes-Daimlers with bodies for the safe conveyance of tin ore, three machines a week left Raub and Kuala Lipis respectively.



Milnes-Daimler lorry no. R 33 on a 1 : 25 gradient on the Kuala-Kubu road.

In June 1908 a service using three 28 h.p. Milnes-Daimlers charabancs commenced between Kuala Pilah and Seramban station on the Malacca line, the road has many bends and a hill section of 6 miles with an average gradient of 1 : 25. Two short services are operated from headquarters in Kuala Lumpur to Ampang ( 6 miles) and Salak South ( 4 miles), vehicles used are 28 h.p. Milnes-Daimlers with 35 seat bodies; there is fierce local Chinese competition on these routes.



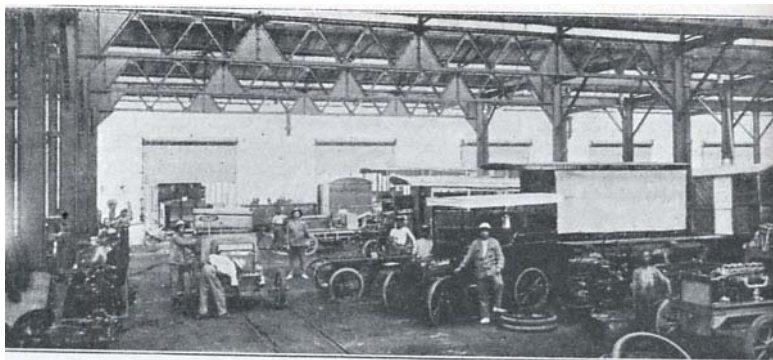
Three 28 h.p. Milnes-Daimler lorries and a charabanc.





Straker-Squire and Albion crossing waterfall near the Gap in the Semangkok Pass at an altitude of 2750 feet.

All heavy repairs are carried out at the central locomotive workshops 3 miles from Kuala Lumpur. Vehicles operating in the Klang district successfully run 20000 miles before overhaul but those on the Pahang and Seremban services due to steep gradients and hard surfaces require attention after some 10000 miles. Labour comes from mixed nationalities and comprises Chinese, Tamils, Malays, Bengalis, Cingalese and a few Eurasians. The Chinese and Tamil form the main mechanical element, the Tamil is a more artistic workman but cannot compete with the Chinese for energy. The Malay make excellent drivers and the Eurasians good chargehands. Garages or out stations are of steel frame construction with corrugated iron cladding, cement floor with a pit, water supply, petrol and oil store, properly built quarters for drivers and conductors, resident fitter and storekeeper.



Kuala Lumpur workshops, Straker-Squires, Milnes-Daimler and Albion.

The fleet numbering 5 in December 1906 is now 45. Tyre life varies considerably according to district, terrain etc and returns of 6000 to 12000 miles are made. Four cylinder engines of 30 / 40 h.p. are favourable with low tension ignition which the local employees find easy to understand. Gilled tube radiators proved best in service. The bodywork is of steel frame construction and simple as possible. Average running costs work out to be about 36 cts. ( 10d.) per car mile. Petrol being about 50 cts. ( 1s. 2d. per gallon).



Milnes-Daimler as an Empire Day float at the pageant in Kuala Lumpur 1909.

## Notes:

### Vehicles.

**Milnes-Daimler:** Basically of German Daimler (Mercedes) manufacture built at Marienfelde, Berlin and sold by G.F.Milnes (a tramcar body builder from Wellington, Shropshire) who had in 1901 obtained sole rights for distribution in Great Britain and the British Empire. These vehicles proved to be very successful and by 1907 over 300 were running in London. Subsequently the gear driven final drive became un-popular in favour of the more conventional chain, bevel or worm drives.

In the fleet the following numbers are known:

Charabanc no. 10.

Charabanc no. R 38.

Lorry no. R 33 or 35.

**Thornycroft :** Built at Basingstoke , Hampshire where strong and reliable vehicles were built starting with steam wagon production in 1896, many vehicles were sold into the Colonies.

No fleet numbers or other details known.

**Straker-Squire:** Built at Bristol, at first selling vehicles produced by the German company Bussing. It is likely that these vehicles were fitted with Wolseley engines.

In the fleet the following numbers are known:

Charabanc no. R 23.

**Albion:** Built at Scotstoun, Glasgow. Tough and reliable light commercials that found popularity throughout the Colonies . Some are likely to be models A3 with two cylinder engines.

In the fleet the following numbers are known:

Mail bus no. 43, registration no. H. SL 43.

**Halley:** Also Scottish built in Glasgow and exported throughout the Colonies.

**Leyland-Crossley:** Built at Leyland 1905 / 7 using Crossley engines.

No fleet numbers or other details known.



A NEW DE DION-BOUTON PUBLIC SERVICE CAR IN KUALA LUMPUR, PAHANG.

French built DeDion Bouton bus , typical of the type operated in competition to the F.M.S.Rly. buses.

#### List of services.

Tapoh to Tapoh Road Station.

Chenderiang to Temon Station.

Selangor to Klang Station.

Raub to Kuala Kubu Station.

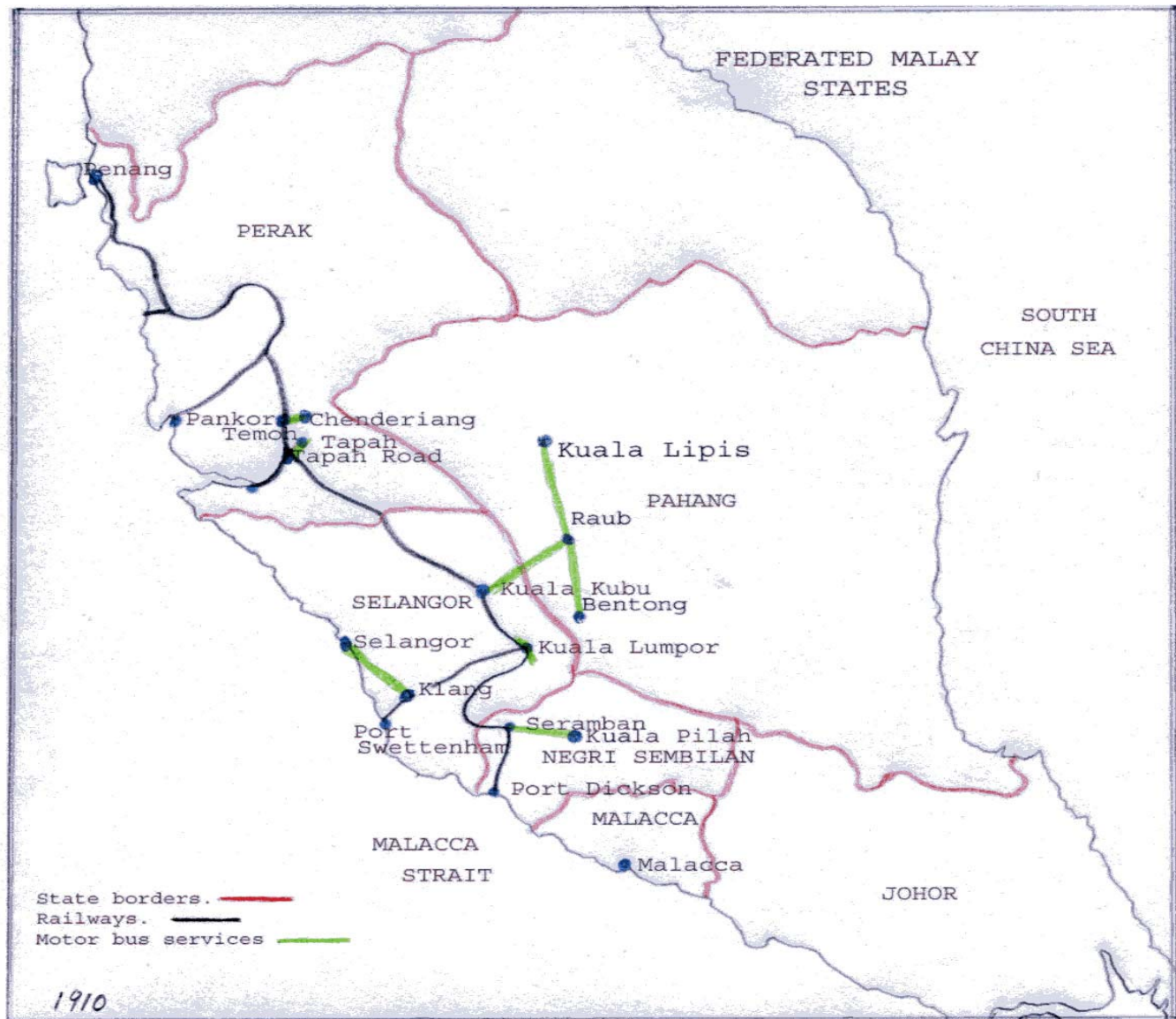
Kuala Lipis to Raub.

Raub to Bentong.

Kuala Lumpor local services to Ampang and Salok South.



## Railway and motor services map 1910.



'Uncle Howard' – At present his identity is unknown except a photograph album dating 1911 – 1920 titled 'Uncle Howards album' has recently come to light. This person was obviously a senior engineer on the railway system.

Richard Peskett.  
January 2009.