CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
OF SCANIA IN THE UK

It is with great pleasure and pride that I write the foreword to this reprint of Commercial Motor’s celebration of 50 years of Scania in the UK.

When Scania-Vabis, as the company was called back then, arrived on these shores our world was a very different place indeed. A gallon of fuel cost around 25 pence, Carriers’ Licences effectively made the transport industry a closed shop and Milton Keynes, the home our UK headquarters today, was no more than a paper plan.

Half a century on and much has changed. One constant, though, is the vital role road transport plays in our way of life. Now, as in the 1960s, the vast majority of goods are taken to market by trucks, simply because there is no more effective or efficient way to move freight. That’s a fact as true today as it ever was, something we at Scania believe will continue long into the future.

As this publication reveals, the past 50 years have witnessed many innovative advances in our vehicle engineering and technology. Throughout, our aim has been to deliver the best possible transport economy. Now, as we look towards our second half century in the UK, our pledge is to continue raising the bar ever-higher. This is our challenge, and one we look forward to with relish.

In the following pages, Commercial Motor takes a journey through the past of Scania, highlighting a number of operators in the process. You may well recognise some of the names here, possibly even your own appears. Whatever the case, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Scania customers over the years – your business is truly appreciated and valued by every member of our UK team.

I sincerely hope you will find these articles enjoyable and that they will serve to demonstrate just how far we have all come since that day back in 1964 when the name of Scania first appeared on the register of companies in the United Kingdom.

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Managing Director
Scania (Great Britain) Limited
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SINCE THE WORLD'S first truck appeared in 1896, few CV marques have reached the height of Scania's global reputation. Renowned for robust, reliable and long-serving vehicles, that always retain top resale values, the Swedish manufacturer celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1991. The maker's UK presence now stretches back an impressive 50 years. Scania-Vabis (Great Britain) was initially formed to sell engines, and its first office near Heathrow delivered about 20 powerplants during its first year in operation. However, Scania had plans for a larger British presence, and during 1965 it took groups of British hauliers on factory tours in Sweden.

Ken Beresford of Stoke-on-Trent, John Smillie of Glasgow and Fred Robinson of Stockton-on-Tees were among many well-known industry figures who were impressed by what they saw at SÖdertälje.

In 1967 Scania-Vabis (Great Britain) imported an initial batch of trucks. At the same time three dealerships were announced; WWS Commercials of Hemel Hempstead and B&W Motors of Wolverhampton, backed up by a sole presence north of the border at Reliable Vehicles (Scotland) in Renfrew. Scania's flagship model at that time was the 76-series. Offered either as the L76 with a normal control cab or an LB76 with forward control, the latter variant was considered ideal for Britain. The LB76 was similar in looks to Seddon's 1964 Motor Panels cab, but that was where any common denominators ended. The 76-series featured 220hp turbocharged engines coupled to Scania 10-speed gearboxes. The overall performance of these motors was a revelation (see CM's original roadtest on page 34) and they coped easily with UK long-distance and European operations.

Time to increase the pressure

Scania cranked up the pressure substantially on the crowded UK truck marketplace in 1968 when its 0-series was launched. An 80-series and 110-series were the two initial offerings, which were joined by the mighty V8-powered, 140 flagship just one year later. The big square all-steel cab, with its extensive front grille, had passed the world-leading Swedish crash tests and its overall safety was complemented by comfort and interior trim levels, never before witnessed in a truck cab.

Scania (Great Britain) is celebrating 50 years in the UK marketplace. CM looks back at some of the highlights

By

John Henderson

First in: LB76 tractor units (top) were Scania's first UK vehicle imports Followed by: legendary 110 models (right) appeared in 1968.
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TV star: this Astran Scania 110 (above) was one of the stars of the BBC’s legendary Destination Doha documentary.

Weighty number: Scania’s LB80 tractor units (right) punched well above their weight.

Many still argue today that the Scania LB110 did more to advance truck driving and operating standards than any other type before or since. Scania’s UK sales were strong across the board in both rigid and tractor unit sectors, while a wide customer base displayed unmatched loyalty to the brand. After merging with Saab, Scania dropped the Vabis name in 1969. Back in the UK, the emerging importer was renamed Scania (Great Britain) in 1973 and in that year its first UK buses entered service.

Confirming presence in the market

Revised engines, gearboxes and interiors heralded the arrival of the LB81, 111 and 141 models in 1978. All three retained the familiar square cab with model badging now mounted on a black background. The 1-series trucks took Scania to new heights and, just two years later, the road transport industry was stunned with Scania’s futuristic-looking GPRT range, launched in 1980. Debuted in a livery with rainbow-like stripes, the all-new cab still looked like a Scania, thanks to an expansive front grille. However, a raked windscreen and improved panel design gave a space-age appearance, further enhanced by the close-fitting cab air collars, together with roof-mounted and under-bumper air deflectors. Mechanical components had not been forgotten either and the legendary V8 engine (see separate panel) was now tweaked to deliver 388hp. At the start of the 1980s, Scania had also marked the opening of its 30th UK dealer point and a

headquarter relocation to Milton Keynes in 1981. Continual investment in its back-up and support network saw Scania (Great Britain)’s national parts centre open in 1984 and two years later the maker achieved a market share of 10% for the first time.

With echoes of its 0- to 1-series upgrade in 1978, the GPRT 2-series evolved into the 3-series in 1988. The cabs looked similar, but again the main technical developments were mostly out of sight. Still reckoned by some to be the best Scania ever built, the 3-series cruised to International Truck of the Year (IToY) success only 10 months after its unveiling. The judges highlighted Scania’s detailed evolutionary process from the preceding 2-series and the...
TV star: this Astran Scania 110 (above) was one of the stars of the BBC’s legendary Destination Doha documentary.

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1980 Scania 141: launched in 1978, the mighty 141 excelled in heavy haulage and Middle East transport spheres.

1986 Scania 112: Britain’s big fleets readily embraced the Swedish trucks.

1988 Scania 3-series: Scania’s first International Truck of the Year win was thanks to the radical 3-series.

Commanding a premium

Milton Keynes-based Scania (Great Britain) marked its parent company’s centenary with a special group of 100 trucks bearing the name Centurion. Cleverly, the limited edition was attractive not only to buyers looking for a subtly special Scania; it also introduced the Swedish maker’s then revamped new truck range, produced to mark its 100th anniversary. The 100 Centurions were available in a variety of cab, engine and transmission arrangements, but every vehicle in this exclusive group sported Centurion lettering in special-edition, numbered badges on each side of the cab and a Roman soldier’s helmet logo on its sun visor. Buyers who did not wish to paint the cab could opt for a base colour with specifically designed graphic stripes finished in red and gold. An ABS braking system, headlamp wash/wipe, air horns, spotlights and chrome wheel trims were fitted to every Centurion, while inside the lucky driver was treated to Centurion seat covers, seat belts, a radio/CD player and an external temperature gauge. Enhanced levels of safety and security came via central locking and a fire extinguisher. Vehicle number 100 was reserved as the Master Centurion (right) and its incredible specification earned it the title of Truck of the Century. Carrying a price tag of £100,000, the Master Centurion made guest appearances at industry shows. The other 99 trucks carried slightly more modest price premiums and, despite the £1,866 cost over a standard Topline model and hefty £3,366 increment on a standard R cab, the range sold well. Today a Centurion remains one of the most desirable modern classic trucks in the UK and still commands a premium price, regardless of condition.
On the right track: by 1984 Scania (Great Britain) Ltd had opened a national parts centre.

King of the hills

**Developed during** the 1960s, Scania’s legendary V8 diesel engine was conceived at a time when an output of 250hp was considered adequate for a heavy truck. Imagine then, the sensation this maker’s LB140 model caused in 1969, when the big rumbling 350hp motor was made available to UK operators.

Heavy haulage contractors and Middle East transport specialists embraced the truck with open arms and found the 14-litre engine ideal for their ultra-demanding work.

Turbocharged from the start, this 90-degree V8’s durability and reliability levels were unmatched for the time. Consequently, the powerplant gained many fans that duly christened the range topper ‘king of the road’. Cleverly designed to fit under the same cab as Scania’s 11-litre six-in-line engine, the compact V8 also delivered superb driveability, as Scania-Vabis engineers produced a motor that required fewer gear changes, delivered good tractive power at low speeds and, most importantly, had sufficient surplus power throughout its entire operating rev range.

By the mid-1970s, Scania had uprated the V8 to deliver 375hp in its later 141 model, which at the time boasted more than 10hp/tonne, a ratio that did not become common in Europe until almost 25 years later. Charge cooling was introduced as an optional extra in 1982 and became standard three years later. The 14-litre V8 engine bowed out in 2001 after approximately 170,000 examples were produced. In addition to truck applications, Scania also used the block for industrial and marine applications, while naturally aspirated V8s were developed for Scania coaches.

The 16-litre successor was launched in 2000 and was a completely new design. The initial Euro-3 variant kept its 90-degree opposing cylinder angle and was introduced with a top output of 580hp. Further power increases that took the V8 up to 620hp and then 730hp through subsequent Euro-4, -5 and -6 emission regulations followed in due course.

The big 4-0: Scania’s venerable V8 engine celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009.
piece de résistance was Södertälje designer Axel Pettersson’s new Topline roof. Scania pulled out all the stops across the globe to mark its centenary in 1991, but the UK team’s limited-edition Centurion range must rank as one of the best truck PR initiatives of all time. By that time, Scania’s first Streamline cab was available and it helped rewrite the book on fuel economy standards thanks to clever engineering design. In 1994 the Scania UK network hit 90 service centres and that figure meant no customer was more than 30 minutes away.

Stealing the headlines
Reusing the Topline cab option on a much larger frame, the 4-series first saw the light of day in 1995. Despite a raft of mechanical developments, that range-topping Topline cab with its unusual over-screen top bunk and sensational seat design stole all the headlines. Scania was quick to iron out a few new truck niggles and the 4-series was named IToY champion in 1995. This success was complemented in the UK by a brace of Motor Transport Fleet Truck of the Year awards in 1997 and 2000. Scania’s UK customers had operated a small but select band of normal control models since the marque’s arrival in 1964, but none equaled the T-cab’s impact. Based on the 4-series platform, this iconic bonnet-nosed truck is still in service today and many examples have been restored as show trucks or alternative-looking fleet flagships.

Avoiding the number five, which is considered unlucky

in some nations, the R-series was the first new Scania of the 21st century. Just like its predecessors, it duly won the IToY prize in 2005, a year after its launch. A facelifted R-series also put Scania back atop the IToY podium in 2010.

Demonstrating the UK’s love of all things Scania, operators were quick on the uptake with the second Streamline series in 2013. At the end of that year this super Swede’s market share stood at 18.1%. After the spectacular success of the limited-edition Centurion models 23 years ago, Scania (Great Britain) now celebrates 50 years in the UK with the limited-edition Golden Griffin.

Going by Scania’s record for reliability, it’s a fair bet that almost all of these 50 special editions will be around for the marque’s UK centenary in 2064!
Golden opportunity

A griffin is a legendary creature with the body, tail, and back legs of a lion, the head and wings of an eagle and an eagle’s talons as its front feet. As the lion was traditionally considered the king of the beasts and the eagle the king of birds, the griffin was thought to be an especially powerful and majestic being. Known for guarding treasure and priceless possessions, the griffin was thought of as king of all creatures. Keen to produce its own treasure to celebrate 50 years in the UK, Scania is marking the occasion with the production of the Golden Griffin, a limited-edition V8 tractor unit of which only 50 examples will be produced. Each of the special vehicles will be instantly recognisable by their striking gold livery, which has been designed by Scania’s in-house team of stylists and is available in two formats depending on livery requirements.

Each model is available only with Scania’s R-series Streamline Topline cab and will carry a plaque bearing its unique limited-edition number. The choice of available engine outputs will be 580hp or 730hp, although model numbers 1 and 50 in the range will be equipped with Scania’s range topping Euro-6, 730hp powerplant. All Golden Griffins can be specified in 4x2, 6x2, 6x2/2, 6x2/4 or 6x4 (for STGO Category 1 and 2) wheelplan format, and Scania’s luxury Griffin pack will be fitted as standard. In addition, each vehicle is equipped with a wide array of home comforts that range from a kitchenette to a TV/DVD player, plus three luxury™ packages consisting of Black Leather V8, Prestige and Driver. These finishes assure both the owner and driver of the ultimate in terms of specification, comfort and safety.

A range of active and passive safety features, including lane departure warning, adaptive cruise control and advanced emergency braking will also all be fitted, and each truck will feature a 21st century entertainment system.
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When I was told a few weeks ago that the Swedish Scania-Vabis goods vehicles were to be sold in the UK it reminded me of the somewhat legendary tales that drivers would tell on their return to the coffee shop after taking vehicles on to the continent of Europe. Many times I had heard the almost awesome praise of this machine often by men whose opinions I respected, and in the back of my mind there was built up a picture of the ultimate in quality, reliability and ease of servicing.

During a test that I carried out recently on the 32-ton g.t.w. tractive-unit coupled to a York three-axled semi-trailer, in an area from Corby to Crick on M1, via A427, taking in Market Harborough and Rockingham village on A6003, I found that whilst not completely out of this world, the Scania is a very good machine indeed, particularly from the driver’s point of view.

The test vehicle was a 117 in.-wheelbase model powered by the DS11 turbocharged engine which develops a maximum power output of 237 b.h.p. at 2,200 r.p.m. and a maximum net torque of 663 lb. ft. at 1,400 r.p.m. As may well be imagined these two figures show that the performance on the road might well be out of the ordinary and to my mind, the reasons for the enthusiastic chatter of drivers who have found themselves competing with the Scania on European roads.

There is no doubt that the vehicle performs extremely well. It is quite capable of pacing vehicles of half its own weight with a degree of cheek that must be sampled to be believed. And, moreover, it does this with a complete absence of fuss and noise, rather in the manner that one expects from an unladen luxury coach.

Extremely soft suspension gives the Scania, its driver, passenger and load a perfect ride. The use of helper springs at the rear axle permits the main rear springs to be of a fully progressive nature, and the riding qualities remain unchanged irrespective of whether the vehicle is laden or unladen.

Swedish regulations demand compliance with regard to noise levels and safety and, to meet these demands the Scania SV 1700 cab must be amongst the most advanced in the world. The makers claim that there has not been a driver killed in a Scania cab anywhere in the world in the past five years. This is in all probability due to the rigorous testing that the unit must undergo before it is acceptable to the authorities. These tests require that the roof must withstand a static load of about 14 tons 14 cwt, and the front corner pillars must withstand almost 2 tons impact, which is, for instance, equivalent to being hit by an object weighing 1,100 lb. at 25 m.p.h. The same requirement is made of the back of the cab.

Noise level requirements have had their effect on the degree of insulation from engine noise, which in turn has resulted in excellent insulation from engine heat as well. The fact that one would not be permitted to wake up the whole neighbourhood by the noisy closing of cab doors has resulted in Rolls-Royce-like action on those of the Scania cab.

Driver comfort is impeccable with the actual cab completely devoid of any metal connections to the chassis. This keeps the noise and vibration to an absolute minimum, whilst the provision of a suspension seat enables one to sit in the vehicle, rather than on it as is the case with many others. Vision is good other than where rather heavy corner pillars create a bit of a blind spot. Screen wipers clean a good area of the screen, but once again there is a blind spot created by a section that is not cleaned, which could quite easily be avoided.

Heating and demisting is, as might be expected, extremely effective. A very powerful heater unit supplies either heated or fresh air to ducts in the driver’s foot compartment and to a channel along the
bottom of the screen. Eighteen jets in this channel direct air to the screen to provide demisting and defrosting and—as I was told by a driver who had had experience of the model—do this extremely effectively. Strict insurance regulations in Sweden have had their effect upon such simple things as grab rails, for instance, two substantial rails being fitted to each side of the cab providing safe and easy entry and exit.

Comprehensive instrumentation

Instrumentation is comprehensive with a Keanz automatic speedometer, a rev counter, air-pressure clocks—reading pressure for both circuits—and oil, water-temperature and fuel gauges.

Most aspects of the vehicle's performance on the road can only be described as perfect. The power steering gives sensitive and light control when manoeuvring in close quarters as well as at high speed on motorways. The manner in which the engine holds on to its revs in difficult conditions is truly amazing and even at the end of my 110 miles testing it still surprised me with the way in which it held on to a couple of much lighter vehicles over a difficult route. Engine noise in the cab is, as I have already intimated, of the order that one would expect in a well-appointed luxury coach and it was possible to carry on a quite normal conversation with my companion for the day.

The suspension is provided with a large degree of adjustment by which one can set it for position and weight. I found that the gear levers on both the main and splitter units were positioned in such a
way that it was easy to trap one's knuckles between the lever and dash-panel or bonnet. I was assured that as this was only the second right-hand-drive cab the company had produced, there was plenty of opportunity for this to be altered.

The synchronmesh units on the main gearbox provide adequate synchronizing power for the quickest of changes to be made when this is needed, but those on the splitter box became a bit weak towards the end of the day and I found it a simple task to best the change and crash the gears. I do not want to give the impression that there is a complaint here, but I consider that what can be achieved in one gearbox should be achieved in the other.

Although the brake tests produced no feelings of apprehension the results were a little disappointing when analysed back at the office. Tapley meter readings averaging 68 per cent were recorded on each of the full-pressure stops that were completed, but the average retardation results proved that this was in all probability due to the soft springing because the figures showed that from 20 m.p.h. an average retardation of 12.7 ft/sec.² was obtained and from 30 m.p.h. 12.4 ft/sec.² was the result.

Full-pressure stops with the handbrake from 20 m.p.h. and with the hand reactor valve from the same speed gave results of 45 per cent Tapley and 30 per cent Tapley respectively, both very good, and when the fade test was carried out later in the day a reduction in efficiency of only 7 per cent was recorded on the Tapley meter.

On all the stops made, the wheels of the semi-trailer locked, whilst the tractive unit hardly marked the road. Naturally there was some tendency for the trailer to swing slightly, but a full-pressure stop from 20 m.p.h. whilst turning on about a 50 ft. radius gave no cause for alarm.

I carried out a number of fairly fast turns with the vehicle, mainly because I wanted to assess what the effect of the soft springs would be if a load with a fairly high centre of gravity were carried. Turning on a fixed circle of about 80 ft. diameter at 18 m.p.h. caused the vehicle to heel a fair amount, although I must admit that I still had no cause for alarm. I would think,
first engaging the differential lock. Without this the vehicle spun one rear wheel and then the other as the road surface melted and cooled.

A problem that faced me when doing the re-starting tests was what at first appeared to be an extremely fierce clutch. In fact I think the problem of a bad take-off was due possibly to two things, very soft suspension and rather over sensitive engine mountings. As the torque reaction of the engine-load winds up the mounting rubbers, the clutch bites causing the engine to die very quickly. This depresses the front springs and the action of these rebounding together with the surge of power when the engine picks up again causes the vehicle to buck wildly. This was accentuated when trying the reverse starts by the wheelspin mentioned above.

Fuel consumption proved to be a bit high when compared with British-built vehicles of similar size, but not when compared with the two American-built vehicles that I have tested. Main road work—where the route could be described as harder than average, at no time exceeding 40 m.p.h.—produced a result of 5.62 m.p.g. at an average speed of 32.15 m.p.h. This average was achieved with a complete absence of effort on my part with the vehicle swinging along in line and easy style.

The synchronmesh gear box and power steering make the negotiation of difficult routes a pleasure. Motorway operation gives the Scania the opportunity to show its paces and, whilst its top speed of 57 m.p.h. is not ultimately fast, the usual motorway gradients failed completely to reduce its road speed and only reduced the fuel consumption by 0.12 m.p.g. from that achieved on normal roads despite the fact that the average speed was increased by some 10.5 m.p.h.

A test carried out on M1—running north from the Watford Gap service area to the junction of A427—was completed in cruising conditions not exceeding 45 m.p.h. Even though there is a long climb away from the service area up to where the M45 turn-off is located, during which section the machine had to be driven hard, a fuel consumption figure of 6 m.p.g. was returned with an average speed of 38.2 m.p.h. Unladen fuel consumption tests over normal main roads not exceeding 40 m.p.h. produced a figure of 10.6 m.p.g. at an average speed of 37.25 m.p.h.

These results could, I believe, be said to be the very worst that could be expected and ones that any average driver should be able to match quite easily. I would consider that a fair overall average consumption should be between 6.5 and 7.5 m.p.g.

The York trailer behaved as perfectly as did the tractive unit, for at no time during the test did it present me with handling problems. This was particularly so when negotiating a winding and narrow route during which the trailer was exceptionally stable and obedient, and as I was "pushing" the outfit during this section I was suitably impressed. I do, however, stand by comments that I have made previously when testing long trailers regarding general manoeuvrability in very close quarters. These conditions would, I am sure, still have presented me with some difficulty despite the power steering of the Scania.

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**Test Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEIGHTS</th>
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<tr>
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<th>DISTRIBUTION</th>
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<td>Ttractive unit rear axle</td>
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<td>Semi-trailer bogie</td>
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| POWER:WEIGHT RATIO    | 7.4 b.h.p. per ton gross weight as tested |
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<tr>
<th>FUEL CONSUMPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Unladen, undulating route not exceeding 40 m.p.h., 8.62 m.p.g. at 52.15 m.p.h. (180 gross ton-m.p.g.; 5.560 time-load mileage factor).</td>
</tr>
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<td>(b) Laden, full throttle on motorway, 5.5 m.p.g. at 42.6 m.p.h., average speed (178 gross ton-m.p.g.; 7.575 time-load mileage factor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Laden, cruising on motorway not exceeding 45 m.p.h., 6.0 m.p.g. at 38.2 m.p.h., average speed (193 gross ton-m.p.g.; 7.390 time-load mileage factor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Unladen (10.75 g.t.w.) on normal main roads not exceeding 45 m.p.h., 10.6 m.p.g. at 37.25 m.p.h., average speed (112 gross ton-m.p.g.; 4.290 time-load mileage factor).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCELERATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through gears, 0-20 m.p.h., 24.2 sec.; 0-30 m.p.h., 45.3 sec.; 0-60 m.p.h., 60.1 sec.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>MAXIMUM SPEED</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approximately 57 m.p.h.</td>
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</table>

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**Scania-Vabis/York 32-ton artic**

**BRAKING**

From 20 m.p.h., 33 ft. (12.7 ft./s²).
From 30 m.p.h., 78.25 ft. (12.4 ft./s²).
Secondary brakes from 20 m.p.h., 45 per cent.
(Tapley meter).

**TURNING CIRCLES**

Vehicles: semi-trailer, 58.5 ft. left lock, 58.5 ft. right lock. Tractive unit only: 41.25 ft. left lock, 40.0 ft. right lock. Swept circles: 45.75 ft. left lock, 45.75 ft. right lock. 4.4 turns from lock to lock.

**FORWARD VISIBILITY**

To within 10.25 ft. of front bumper at ground level on centre line.