railway line John Moore is turning the clock back to make a transport dream come true

rested as a spy in 1944!

As a youngster in wartime London, John went with his father on a tram ride which took them into the docklands.

The troops were pouring on to the ships for D-Day, but when Mr Moore senior threw his coat over his head to light a cigarette in the wind the military police thought he was taking photos.

John's dad was arrested but when he was found to be innocent of any crime he was quickly released.

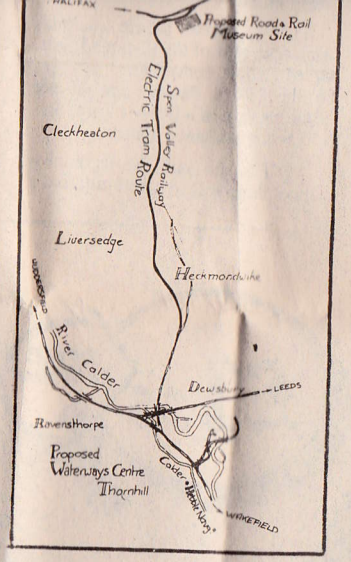
The incident, not surprisingly, stuck in an impressionable mind and John's love affair with trams began then.

Forty years later, he is about to make a lifelong hobby his job.

He has just left Rowntree Mackintosh's Halifax plant to help launch a new West Yorkshire County Council initiative that will put trams back on the map.

John Moore, who was services engineer with the sweet firm for 14 years, will become West Yorkshire's chief engineer on the Spen Valley tramway.

For him it is a dream come true, a chance to combine his professional expertise and amateur affection



on a project that will cost around £1.2 million.

It is hoped that by this time next year trams will be running on a disused railway line between Low Moor, in Bradford, and Cleckheaton. In future years Heckmondwike will be added and eventually the track will run over six miles to Dewsbury.

There will be other fascinating developments too. A public transport museum at Low Moor will feature vintage examples of buses, trams and municipal vehicles.

And the intention is to offer rides for John the large-scale death of trams was very sad.

"They used electricity and were pollution-free, quiet and far more comfortable than buses," he says.

But that massive contraction is at last on the point of being reversed.

John believes that the Spen Valley plan can really work. He is sure there is high potential for passenger use.

"People who live in the towns of Bradford, Cleckheaton, Liversedge, Heckmondwike and Dewsbury and work in one of the others will be able to use the system.

"Shoppers will be drawn, as well as those people wishing to use the wide range of recreational facilities — the leisure centre at Cleckheaton, the bus museum at Heckmondwike and the proposed cycle way."

In addition, of course, the project should attract tourists and public transport enthusiasts from a wide area.

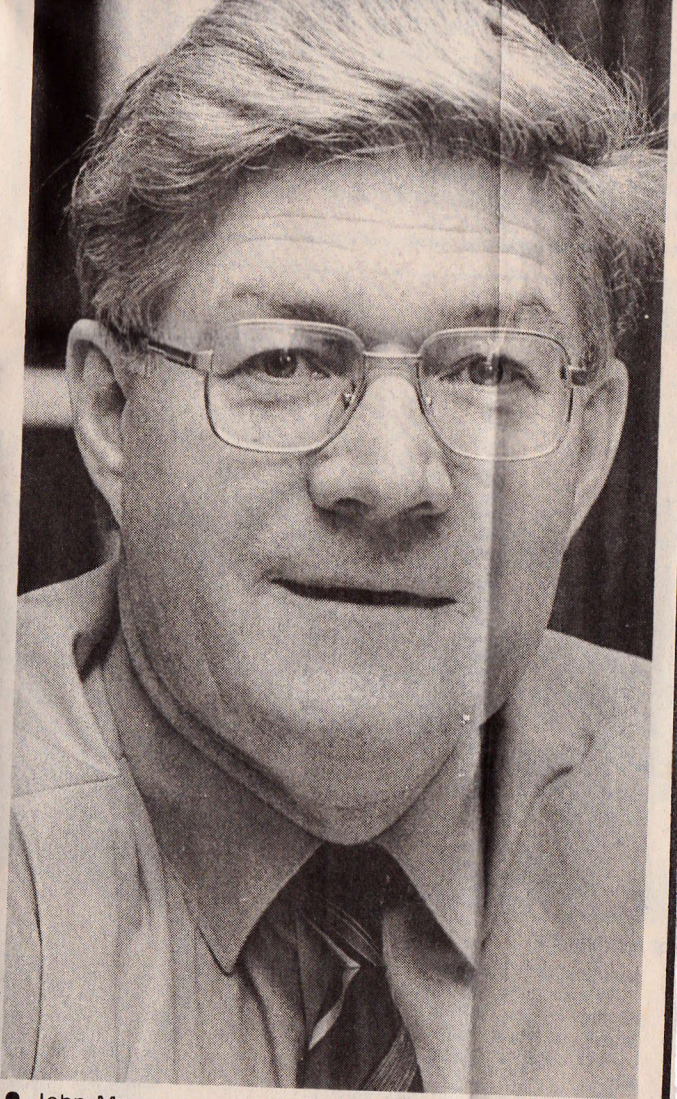
John's job will be to deal with the "mechanical and electrical aspects" of the tram system.

There are already four trams in storage. More will be added and the excitement is growing. John stresses, though, that a colossal amount of work is still to be done.

Nonetheless the vision is not so far from being realised. Who knows, 1985 could herald a new age of the tram.



A tram from the declining days of Halifax's trams. This one, pictured in Newstead, was the Pellon service in 1937.



● John Moore . . . turning a lifelong hobby into a job as chief engineer on the new Spen Valley tramway.

It is an ambitious project and John Moore is the first to admit that it poses a major challenge, but it is a test that he is relishing.

He is approaching it with the same intense enthusiasm that sent him scurrying on his bike to a tram graveyard when the London service died in 1952. He took five bob and came back with a pocketful of relics.

It is a keenness and warmth that John has since taken all over the world. He joined the merchant navy in the mid-Fifties, trained as an engineer, then saw years of service on the high seas.

"I was on oil tankers with Esso. We went to North America, South America, the Middle East. I even spent four hours in Australia on one voyage," he laughs.

That brief stay didn't prevent him tracking down Melbourne's trams and taking photos.

"They were all out of focus," he adds. "I forgot to change the camera setting!"

He married and the lure of his family brought him back to England in 1966. He worked with Nestle's for four years in Middlesex, then headed north.

"My family on my father's side were from Huddersfield. We decided to come up to Yorkshire," he explains.

It was then that he began a long association with Rowntree Mackintosh, which ended a couple of weeks ago when this new opportunity offered itself.

John Moore's trams have provided some happy chances. He met his second wife, Maureen, at a wedding in Scotland where he was best man.

He found himself talking to a chap who had been a tram conductor in Glasgow as a student. Maureen, his sister-in-law, offered to show John the local tram museum.

That tour didn't happen for a good while afterwards, but 12 weeks later the happy couple were wed. They now live in Norfolk Place, Halifax. Maureen is a drama teacher with Calderdale Theatre School.

At present John is two-thirds of the way through a six-part history of Halifax's trams, being published by Halifax Antiquarian Society.

The town's tram service ran from 1898 to the second world war. Its initial routes went from Horton Street to King Cross and Highroad Well and grew from there.

Maintenance standards dropped as funds were low during the Great War, and the tram service went into a slow decline.

Similar trends followed for other tramways around the country. And