

The Future of Parking

Having been invited to take part in this oral, written, or other media celebration in honour of the memory of Ernest Davies a founder member of the BPA, who could turn down the chance to draw comparisons of then and now, when Ernst and others were shaping the Association into a leading advocacy for both carpark owners and the newly evolving driving public.

I was surprised to learn the origin of the carpark is in fact very British, definitely worth a read, short but interesting and compiled by one of our members <https://parkmark.co.uk/brief-history-of-car-parks> so thanks to them, this gave me the muse and topic for this piece, The Future of Parking.

Back then at the turn of the last Century, The City & Suburban Electric Carriage Company at 6 Denman Street, central London, opened the first multi-storey car park in the UK (and probably the world) in May 1901. The garage had seven floors, 19,000 square feet, space for 100 vehicles and an electric elevator to move the vehicles between floors.

In 1902 City & Suburban opened its second garage, a converted building in Westminster known as Niagara that could hold 230 vehicles. At both, electric vehicles were housed, serviced, cleaned, insured, and delivered to owners on request.

Now, we know how the intervening years to this present day have turned out; and to me it looks as if our journey is coming full circle, in only seven or so years' time, virtually all cars in our parking facilities will be as they were in Denman Street and Niagara way back in the 1900's Electric.

I am not sure how many of the original parking operators have actually survived the full circle if any, which includes two World Wars and many global financial skirmishes topped off by none other than a pandemic banning travel and congregation in good measure, I am sure this was all sent to test the full metal of BPA members, hopefully for the final time.

Opportunity, as the world moves to an entirely zero carbon travel future, which is a complicated journey for many different sectors in transport, Aviation, Shipping and Heavy Goods, it seems as if we in community and public transport sectors have been dealt a stronger hand.

Let's try and view this in the way Ernest and his fellow team members may have done in the late 60's, with open eyes for the opportunities being presented to them.

Every journey reached needs somewhere to park, safely and securely, in the knowledge that the owners can collect their cars by paying a small fee for the privilege and of course most importantly the peace of mind we feel having done so.

The future of parking, as Electro Mobility gains pace, we too, the new parking custodians and beneficiaries of the great work Ernest and his team have set out, the new opportunity for our membership is quiet phenomenal "a common link" to all of this is electric vehicles need power, to journey and power to return.

Surface parking lots and multi-storey roof tops provide the very best form of powering the transition using free electricity from solar irradiance, in cloudless blue skies and even on cloudy days, it's always present.

Innovative technology such as High voltage Bifacial PV parking canopies with life expectancies of 30 plus years silently generating power day in day out and it's power that can coupled with batteries that provide members this strong hand.

A 50 parking space canopy can generate 170.5 MW hours annually, sufficient self-generated green electricity to charge 2,624 electric vehicles with a 65 kWh charge, or 200 miles of range.

This would give members the opportunity to provide energy as a service, adding new revenue streams for asset owners and at the last calculation from the RAC in September 2022 each kWh charged will cost the

vehicle owner 63.29p that's a top up charge of £41.13, over the year 50 parking bays will provide a return on investment of 1,465%, I am sure Ernest would approve.

The vision goes further though, the canopies themselves aren't just powerful energy generators, they provide sheltered spaces for vehicles and occupants, often much needed and welcomed refuge from the elements, rain or shine.

Advertising screens suspended under the canopy provide opportunity for targeted advertising and the revenues it brings, public service messages, parking instructions and other useful information.

Intelligent LED lighting and telemetry to indicate when a space in parking row is vacant to save customers, time, fuel and parking anxiety.

Green walls that adorn the ends of our product bring nature in, creating insect bird and bat corridors to transition across the hard landscaped expanse, including opportunity for additional hibernacula and refugia of numerous species, contributing to the overall improvement of biodiversity.

The Future of Parking isn't just about additional revenue streams though, for us it's about mise en place and improvement of the environment within which parking takes place, contributing to the overall improvement of customer experience, whilst providing environmental, ecological and social betterment.

As the circle closes, I am sure forward-thinking leaders such as Ernest would be advising, as they did then in the newly developing world of commercial carparking "build it and they will come" but for us to add, build it well and they will come again.

Thankyou Ernest Davies and the BPA