



Dewsbury Bus Museum NEWSLETTER

Autumn edition - 17th September 2012
West Riding Omnibus Museum Trust (Charity No. 702232)

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FLEETLINE HEADLINE!

Preservation Project - WHL 275J - part 1 *By Mark Byard*

It's amazing what benefit the Internet has brought to the wider population: the ability to search out that pair of jeans that you couldn't find in the local shop, that strange light bulb that fitted in the fridge door, the hotel room in London and, of course, that old West Riding Fleetline that had somehow found its way to Holland!

Paul Salmon was out and about at the Trans-Lancs rally when he bumped into an old friend who mentioned he should take a look at Flickr. A red double-decker had been spotted and a short film clip had been posted on line.

The clip appeared to show a red Alexander-bodied Fleetline parked up at the side of a house. Even though the glimpse was brief, hopes were raised when further investigation revealed the correct style of destination box. After further research of DVLA records, the equivalent database in Holland and correspondence with our contact in Holland, Barend GolverDingen, we were as sure as we could be that the bus was indeed WHL 275J.

This old photograph shows the bus in service, leaving Wakefield bus station.



WHL 273-284J (numbers 273-284) were delivered to West Riding in 1971. They were the first and last batch of Alexander-bodied double-deckers operated by West Riding, although other batches were operated by Yorkshire Woollen.

They followed several batches of Roe-bodied Fleetlines and had a more "lofty" appearance than the Roe examples. Clearly West Riding had a diverse purchasing policy at the time because they were then followed by a final batch of Fleetlines bodied by Northern Counties carrying registration numbers BHL 606-630K. Four other Fleetlines were also purchased from Mexborough & Swinton in 1969 to cover withdrawn Wulfrunians and had a similar body style to the BHL batch.

The Alexander-bodied Fleetlines were delivered in Tilling Green and were eventually painted NBC red in the mid 1970s, first receiving the standard West Riding NBC logo and then the updated Metrobus West Riding logo.

The batch was allocated across several depots and our research showed 275 was delivered on 19th April 1971 and was allocated to Castleford Depot for the majority of its time.

Having only been in service a short time it was renumbered 673 and spent many years of hard work on trunk routes and local services. It left the fleet in April 1984 and passed to Hedingham & District Omnibuses Limited of Sible Hedingham where it gave four years of service, eventually finding its way to Holland in 1991.

Our contact in Holland is sure he bought the bus from someone in Scotland so perhaps 275 spent some time north of the Border too!



It is our understanding that 275 is in very good condition. The vehicle has had an engine overhaul and we are told the chassis is sound. The interior appears to be in great condition and hopefully this photograph gives a good indication of the current status of the bus.

So why should we make an attempt to preserve this vehicle?

Many of us will remember the magnificent Roe bodied Fleetline PHL 235G that was fully overhauled by West Riding apprentices in the 1980s and then repainted in the original West Riding Green livery as recognition that it was the last of its type on the road in the West Riding Fleet. After retirement it was loaned to the West Yorkshire Transport Museum at Bradford but was handed back to West Riding when the collection was disbanded. Unfortunately, despite a last minute attempt to secure the vehicle by WROPS, it found its way to the USA and as far as we know has seen extensive deterioration due to outside storage. What a missed opportunity and what a shame – do we really want the same thing to happen again?

A failed attempt at preserving another Fleetline was also made by Dewsbury Bus Museum members when in 2006 number 279 came to light in Wales. A deputation was sent to inspect it but alas it was too late. The bus had gone to Barnsley a few days prior and another opportunity was lost.

Our double-decker collection has a gap. We are lucky to have two West Riding half-cabs, two West Riding Wulfrunians, a VR and an

Olympian. Yet our collection is missing a Fleetline despite West Riding operating around 100 examples.

Whilst we know of West Riding Fleetlines in Australia, Canada and the USA, (more of these vehicles in the next issue), the practicality and cost of repatriation of any of them means we will probably never see them again so this is really “last chance saloon” for preserving this type of bus.

If you want to see this bus back on the road, providing free journeys at open days and representing over 100 of its former stable mates please dig deep and help us raise the funds to secure it.

Our initial attempts to secure the bus have been met with a favourable response. We are still awaiting confirmation of the condition of the bus and the purchase price. In the meantime Paul Salmon has already committed the funds to repatriate the bus and for that we thank him.

But that is only the start as we have the purchase price to find, the restoration funds that may be needed to get the vehicle roadworthy and on-going storage costs to cover.

Every donation helps, and no amount is too small. If you want to secure this bus then see any WROPS member and pledge some cash to help this project come to fruition.

To be continued..... if we all get behind the project and dig deep!

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

It seems a little scary, but our next newsletter is actually the Christmas edition! It will be sent to all members (by e-mail or snail mail!) on 7th December. If you have an interesting article, or any news, photographs etc, that you would like published, please pass it to Tony Salmon by 30th November.



AUTUMN OPEN DAY

The next big event at Dewsbury Bus Museum is the Autumn Open Day, on **Sunday 18th November**.

This year, it is a week later to avoid conflicting with Remembrance Sunday.

The museum building will be open from 10.30 am until 4.30 pm. Admission will still be only £1.50 per person, including a Souvenir Programme.

We hope that all members will be able to be present on the day, and give some practical help. This is what we need doing:

Advertising - before the event, we need fliers distributing. If you are attending any other event, please take some with you to hand out. If you know of any shop windows or notice boards that will take one, please put one up.

Conductors - we need four or five experienced bus conductors for the shuttle service and "Charlotte's Special".

Bankspersons - we need people at Havelock Street and on Dewsbury Bus Station to supervise reversing vehicles, and keep people out of the roadway.

Setting up - we need people from about 7.30 am to help set up the building, place cones in Havelock Street, and after the event to tidy up.

If you can help in any of this, please let Tony Salmon or Graham Dowson know as soon as possible.

Two of our regular **trade stands** will not be present due to the ill-health of their owners, so if you know anybody who might want to bring a bus-related trade stand, please point them in our direction.

And, of course, tell all your friends about it.

The website will be updated in the next week to include full details, and the facility to order and pay for programmes in advance.

NEW MEMBERS

Since the last Newsletter, we have welcomed three more people aboard. Ronan & Finlay Mallinson are now volunteers, and within days of being accepted were dragged over to the PD2, where our chairman had them scraping framework and priming mudguards.

We also welcome new Junior Member Richard Day who joined us during August.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 15th October, 7.15 pm:
Annual General Meeting, followed by monthly members' meeting in The Principal.

Sunday 28th October:
Heart of the Pennines Rally at Piece Hall.

Sunday 18th November, 10.30 am - 4.30 pm:
Autumn Open Day - details on left.

Monday 19th November, 7.15 pm:
Monthly members' meeting in The Principal.

Friday 30th November:
Deadline for submission of material for the Christmas Newsletter.

Monday 3rd December, 7.30 pm: (tbc)
Unofficial Christmas Dinner in The Principal.

Friday 7th December:
Newsletter and membership renewal details will be sent to all members.

Monday 17th December, 7.15 pm:
Monthly members' meeting in The Principal.

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Tuesday 1st January:
Subscription payments due from all except honorary members.

Monday 21st January, 7.15 pm:
Monthly members' meeting in The Principal.

Monday 18th February, 7.15 pm:
Monthly members' meeting in The Principal.

Sunday 10th March:
Spring Open Day.

ARRIVA HAPPENINGS

The latest batch of Wright Pulsars started to arrive in late August. Entry into service commenced from 1st September so that they could carry "62" plates.



So far, the following buses have been noted operating from Belle Isle depot:

1456 (YJ62 JHU)	1463 (YJ62 JUA)
1457 (YJ62 JJO)	1464 (YJ62 JVE)
1458 (YJ62 JNU)	1465 (YJ62 JVG)
1459 (YJ62 JPX)	1467 (YJ62 JYZ)
1460 (YJ62 JPY)	1468 (YJ62 JZE)
1461 (YJ62 JRV)	1469 (YJ62 JZX)
1462 (YJ62 JTO)	

Following the transfer of the Wakefield Free City Bus from Star Travel, the following Optare Solo buses are now operating from Belle Isle, some still bearing their Star Travel fleet numbers as well as the Arriva ones:

3041 (YK55 ENO)	3043 (YK55 ENT)
3042 (YK55 ENP)	3044 (YJ07 EHP)

3042 carries an all-over advert for Trinity Walk, whilst 1508 (YJ61 OAA) carries an all-over (except for the front) advert for Vodafone.

The last step-entrance DAF Ikarus, number 11 (R10 WAL) was finally withdrawn in August, six months after all the others, and now awaits disposal along with 13 (R69 GNW).

1526 (YJ61 OAZ) has transferred from Belle Isle to Dewsbury, along with one working of services 126 & 127.

(The above photograph was kindly provided by Andy Wardman).

MERCHANDISE



With Christmas fast approaching, you may be looking for an ideal Christmas present for your fellow bus enthusiasts.....

We have a series of four mugs, all retailing at £5.99:

1. "Ethel" - the Leyland Tiger
2. The Panther
3. TWY 8 - the Albion Valiant
4. The Wulf - UCX 275.

If you haven't bought yours yet, they are on sale at events that we visit, and at the Wakeymodels stall, every Saturday on Wakefield Market.

We also still have a stock of Dewsbury Bus Museum Guide Books, retailing at £7.99, available from the same sources.

MONTHLY RAFFLE

The raffle, held at our monthly meetings, continues to raise some very welcome funding. This income is enough to cover the annual insurance costs of two buses. Some great prizes have been won, and June Hare is always grateful to receive any donated articles, not necessarily connected with buses. For example, this month's star prize is a pack of six bottles of Budweiser! The real-ale brigade will be queuing to win this one.....!