

Golden Jubilee edition of the Newsletter Spring 2022

If you have any news or views for publication please contact, hand or send them to mark.byard@live.co.uk or Andrew Beever 01924 265528

Welcome to new members:
**Malcolm Wright
& Billy Scott**



50 years of the Newsletter – another celebration!

We have reached a proper milestone with this edition!

Thanks to the early pioneers of the West Riding Omnibus Museum Trust, and particularly Ken Aveyard, we can rightly proclaim that our Newsletter is 50 years old with this issue.



Left; first edition, first page, dated 6th March 1972

Way back in 1972, as the West Riding Wulfrunian Preservation Society commenced its activities, Ken pulled together this gem that ran to six pages of news. Originally, the newsletter was simply called the "West Riding News", but by July 1974 had "The journal of the West Riding Wulfrunian Preservation Society" added to its title, finally changing to "The West Riding Wulfrunian Preservation Society" newsletter by late 1975.

Regular features included listings of new vehicles to the fleet, re-allocations of vehicle depots and disposals. A review of local independent operators is also included. Comprehensive service updates are detailed, along with updates on the WRWPS vehicles being restored, and attendance at various rallies.

The newsletter has obviously had several editors over the years, and for some time Tony Salmon managed the newsletter, when in Summer 2014 Mark Byard took over the role. New blood is always a good thing and Mark is ready to pass the batten to someone new, so if you would like to take up the reins, please shout up as Mark has certainly done his bit for 8 years!

In the meantime, Mark intends to review the first four editions of the Newsletter published in 1972/73, and will pull out a few gems in each of our forthcoming editions.

With Ken still one of our members, it will be interesting to see what memories are stimulated for him, when he sees what he compiled 50 golden years ago!! Brace yourself Ken!

The other Ethel bus!

Take a look below at Ethel B's preservation, and then look again! For the bus featured in these shots is not our trusty Ethel B, EHL 344, but her sister EHL 345!!

EHL 345 did make it into the ranks of preserved bus territory and was resident in the Doncaster area. What does seem strange is that she is pictured alongside Wulfrunian UCX 275 on what was probably a WRWPS outing? (Editors note – after writing this comment, and having read one of the original Newsletters previously mentioned – all became clear and will be explained in a future edition)

So here is a question – what happened? If she had been preserved and then fell on hard times was the Society ever given the chance to acquire her, or was she unceremoniously carted off to the scrap yard? Perhaps some of our more mature readers can answer that question.....



Whatever happened, it was clearly sad, as she looks in rather fine fettle on these shots. She would have made an excellent twin for Ethel B, just like the twin coach versions EHL 335 and EHL 336 that grace our events.

Over to our regular readers and contributors if they have any answers regarding her final fate.

May Open Day

Preparations are well under way for our Museum Open Day on Sunday 15th May.

Event's Organiser, Andrew Beever, has asked that all regular volunteers assume that they will be allocated their normal duties, and if you cannot attend for any reason, or would like to be more involved with the "doing" on the day, please give him a call on 01924 265528.

We are planning to operate services slightly different from the November event and slightly change the layout of the bus stop departure area at the loading bays. As usual, a full briefing will be given at the Members Meeting on 20th April so if you can attend., please do so!

Our Café will be operating as normal and the donation of homemade cakes that we can sell on the day will be gladly accepted by the Ladies on Café duty. Di will be organising the Tombola and any donations will be warmly welcomed. More Café helpers are required please!!

So – start the countdown to a great day out!!

A member visits Denver USA for a West Riding re-union!

In the winter of 1994, our member Bryan Batty was invited to Denver, Colorado, and here is the story of what he found!

Jim Speed, who had formerly worked at West Riding, had invited me to see the operation he was running in the USA and to meet Terry & Nancy Murphy who had amassed quite a collection of former UK buses. They had initially operated an antiques shop and positioned an old decker in front of it to attract attention. It certainly did, and they were soon swamped with enquiries for vintage bus hire, which had not been the original plan! Jim had subsequently been recruited as Engineering Director and this gave me the chance to visit and see the place and business whilst I took holiday from Black Prince Buses, where I worked. I enjoyed my time there and the following shots show what I found.



Seen above top right and bottom left, the former immaculate fully refurbished and last ever independent West Riding Automobile Company bus bought – Daimler Fleetline PHL 235G. Having had a full strip down and rebuild what a shame that this was then allowed to go overseas, and to be left in this state. I did not realise what I was actually looking at on my visit!! Top and bottom right show ex West Riding Bristol VR's being readied for service.



In the first shot above left, you could be forgiven for thinking you were at a remote farm somewhere in Yorkshire, last Saturday! But no, this was Denver 1994 with, to name but one local bus, a Halifax half cab in residence with "HALFAX WEST END" proudly displayed on the destination aperture! Top right again looks like it could be somewhere rural in the UK in the early 1980's, with school buses being readied for the evening run out! A rather sad shot of former Hebble, DJX 351D, originally number 351 in their fleet, is shown in the bottom left shot with its roof cut off. What a sad end to that one, and finally bottom right, a former West Riding VR converted for USA use, with its roof also long gone. Bryan says, "it was a fantastic trip and I thoroughly enjoyed my time there".

Magazine bonanza, with a sting in the tail

As can be seen below, some of our buses featured in various periodicals over the winter months. First up was our member David Keel's lovely West Riding liveried FLF, which featured in Bus & Coach Preservation magazine.



Then hot on its heels, came two features in the January 2022 edition of Buses magazine. First was Mark Byard's Ethel C coach as the centre spread, followed by a review of the November open day, somewhat bemoaning the fact that we hadn't got both Wulfrunians in attendance, even though we didn't advertise that we had planned to!



It is somewhat annoying when an article is presented in this way, particularly given that said magazine clashed their annual rally event with our planned August open day, which we then had to cancel. Add in the lack of understanding of the efforts that we make to give the public a great day out, the hard work undertaken by many of our members to keep numerous buses on the road, and the expense of running events, and it does leave a bad taste.

So, should we invite the press to attend a future bus launch when there appears to be a complete lack of understanding of what we do? That is the question.

An unbelievable survivor

Classic Bus Magazine November edition threw up a rather surprising find – the story that not only former B&S and West Riding Daimler, CHL 772, had survived, but that CHL 771, recorded as scrapped in Barnsley in 1967, had also been secretly rescued and stored away safely! Now in the care of a tourism company in France, it is reported that 772 is already decked out as a Pullman dining coach, whilst 771 is being restored to a similar format. Whilst this will probably frustrate many readers, the fact remains it is reported that both survive, and indeed a bus once thought scrapped, is still alive. Could any more come to the surface.... Who knows! **UPDATE - all attempts to confirm this story as being true have failed to get a response from the people claiming to have CHL 771 in their care, so who knows if it does survive? – we think not!**

Out and about

On Saturday 5th March we took the PD2, the Arab and the Panther on a West Riding Drive-around. The journey was a very special recreation of the last West Riding Wulfrunian service, as detailed in the last newsletter.

The Yorkshire Post, Dewsbury Reporter and Wakefield Express got wind of our plans and made a special visit to the Museum in the days before and sent a professional photographer to capture lots of shots of our buses.



Left; Yorkshire Post Saturday 5th March and a cracking report on the Museum

We received a fantastic review, with no cost to us, other than a few hours of our time. The story of the founding of WROPS was told and we even managed to get a mention for our two remaining original members, Leo Pratt and Ken Aveyard. As the buses rolled through Wakefield, what a delight it was to see Leo at the Wakefield Kirkgate stop with his hand stuck out, ready to board the Arab.

The day was not without incident when KHL 855 failed due to fuel starvation caused by a blocked fuel line. An attempt was made to limp her home but after several failures, Mark and Andrew threw the towel in and she was towed home from Horbury Road. She did however drive into the Museum and thanks to the expert attention of Bill Oldroyd and Andrew Beever, by Monday lunchtime all was well and she was romping up Scout Hill on a test run at full pelt! The event was well attended by our members and watch out for announcements about more Saturday Members Only trips during the summer.

Vehicle Updates

This section requires information from vehicle owners so if you own a bus or coach please can you send in your updates!!

We are very aware that at each monthly members meeting we cover every vehicle's progress from month to month. As such, going forward we intend to only report items here that are of significant note and should any member wish to have regular vehicle updates, minutes of the Monthly Meetings can be sent on provision of a stamped addressed envelope.

Any owners wishing to provide full updates for inclusion here, will be welcome to do so going forward and it would perhaps be a good idea that in one edition per year that we publish the exact status of every vehicle in the collection.

West Riding One -Offs

In the last edition, John Hinchliffe provided various shots of a PD2 that had an unusual combination of window openers. Basil Hancock writes:

"Further to the photos of Leyland Titan PD2/1 677, I can offer no explanation for the mix of opening window types and can only agree that it may have been some kind of experiment. Curious because West Riding already had lots of buses with sliding windows. However, the windows on 677 are not "Farington" design. Note by the way that it is "Farington" (with a "t") which is a Leyland suburb and also the name given to one of the numerous Leyland plants in the town (and in which I worked for some years). Farringdon (two "r") is an area of central London and a station on the underground and soon Crossrail too. There is also a Faringdon (one "r") in Wiltshire.

There was an article in Classic Bus a few years which confirmed the Farington body was introduced in 1948 to replace the earlier post-war Leyland body with its half drop windows, but it included separately mounted window glass and sliding ventilators, as also used at the time in Duple double deck bodies, early Leyland Olympics, BBW bodies and some other buses too. Later versions from 1950, probably mainly if not entirely those designed for 27-foot overall length, had more conventionally mounted sliding ventilators as fitted to 677 (and in my opinion much better looking too). Apparently, this body was NOT known as Farington, in fact I do not believe that it had a model name at all." (Editor's note - Thanks Basil - we can't wait for publication of your Wulfrunian Book

In this edition, we take a look at a couple of saloons.

Sat proudly in front of Charles H Roe's premises is this rather strange beast operated by West Riding. To say it had an unusual layout is a bit of an understatement, with a centre door, rather than a more conventional front door. (Photograph from our Archive)



Left; DHL 686, factory fresh

The Monday team at the Museum think it does look quite handsome, but why the centre entrance?? DHL 686 was an AEC Regal IV and entered service in July 1951 as number 709 in the fleet. It was withdrawn in May 1964, then finding favour with Arthur Rowe & Sons of Cudworth for the Ideal Service joint operations. It became an accident victim in April 1966 and was withdrawn and presumably scrapped.

Close inspection of the factory fresh bus reveals that it has seats very similar to Ethel bus, that look rather comfortable for a service bus, so it was clearly going to be used on weekends as a coach. Other points to note are the rather strange "West Riding" insignia - what was that all about since earlier and later vehicles carried the more standardised version that we all know and love?

To complete the story, West Riding had also dabbled with an earlier Regal IV, registration number DHL 166, delivered in 1950, to a more conventional front entrance style. It is shown below operating in later life for T Williams & Sons.



Left; DHL 166 in later life, note the front door just visible

Having taken a front entrance version, it really does make you wonder why on earth West Riding took a centre entrance one a year later?

So, why did they buy these two one offs? Did West Riding buy them as a trial, and then decided that the half cab PS2 was a better option, placing orders for both bus and coach versions in 1952? If you know the answer, please let us know! Indeed, number 709 was the only delivery that year, West Riding having just acquired Bullocks. Perhaps they were also stretched for cash and Leyland did a deal on what were essentially very old fashioned, if proven, half cab saloons?

Although AEC clearly lost out on the 1952 order for saloons, as the PS2 arrived in quantity, AEC made a return in style in 1956 with coaches JHL 581-582 and buses JHL 706 - 717, all with Reliance chassis.

The Green buses – by Stuart Goldthorpe, continued from our last edition

The last three new vehicles to be delivered in 1963 were Bedford VAL14 with Plaxton (C52F) coach bodies 992-994 (YHL 992-994) These were followed in 1964 by further examples again with Plaxton bodies completing the numbering system 997-999 (2997/2998 HL & 2980 HL). These were the only vehicles to be received during this particular year. By now hopes had been dashed for a long and respectable life span for the Wulfrunian. Unfortunately, some vehicles were becoming a nuisance always suffering with ailments. The air suspension and disc brakes were expensive, king pins and wishbones were poor and general maintenance costs were more than traditional half cab buses. By the time a remedy was found for one symptom another would occur.

During 1964 an Atlantean demonstrator from Leyland Motors arrived for trial purposes. I presume these trials were successful especially when a previous order for 25 Wulfrunians was cancelled and an order for 25 Atlanteans was placed with Leyland. There was also talk of a single decker version of the Wulfrunian. However, during the first four months of 1965 a final batch of green Wulfrunians arrived. Numbered 1000-1029 (BHL 351-380C) deliveries came in January, March and April. They were the first West Riding vehicles to have year suffix letters, which had been in force since 1963. The Roe bodies were similar to previous examples seating 75 passengers. Externally the symmetrical dummy louvre on the lower near side front was no longer fitted and in my opinion without this feature these Wulfrunian's never looked quite right. Entering service from either Selby depot or Castleford depot (1000-1007), Savile Street depot 1008/9 and possibly 1011-1014 in January, 1010 arriving in February. These latest additions would have a very short life, some of this batch only lasting four years. During March Wulfrunians 1015-1021 appeared followed by 1022-1029 in April. Some were to be seen on Belle Isle depot routes, with others on Savile Street and Featherstone depot routes. They moved around between depots, as I remember 1019-1022 having a short stint at Selby depot.

Following the Wulfrunian's new coaching stock arrived in the form of Bedford SB5 with Plaxton Embassy C41F bodies (1030-1035) and further examples with Duple Firefly C41F bodies (1036-1041) BHL 516-527C bringing the total fleet of coaches to 40. However, some of the SB5's did not remain long, lasting only until 1967.

By the end of the year the remaining ex-Bullocks fleet was as follows;

286 (AHL 696) 1947 Leyland Tiger PS1 with Barnaby B35F body.
313-318 (BHL 272-277) 1947 Leyland Titan PD2/1 with Leyland L27/26R body.
329 (CHL 384) 1949 Guy Arab III with Leyland 8.6 engine and Roe B32F body.
333 (CHL 274) 1949 AEC Regal III with Longford C33F body.
337-338 (CHL 743-744) 1950 Leyland Titan PD2/1 with Leyland L27/26R body.
339-340 (CHL 745-746) 1950 Leyland Tiger PS2/1 with Longford C33F body.
341-342 (CHL 771-772) 1950 Daimler CVD6 with Willowbrook DP35F body.

The oldest West Riding vehicles were;

595 (AHL 52) 599-606 (AHL 101-108) 610-618 (AHL 122-130) Guy Arab II (1945-46) body Roe L27/26R.

The first deliveries of 1966 were lightweight coaches which included three Bedford VAL14 followed by a further nine Bedford VAM5 models. All the bodies were built by Plaxton, VAL14 (C52F) and VAM5 (C45F). These vehicles brought a return to fleet numbers 1-3 (EHL 470-472D) and 4-12 (EHL 461-469D). These numbers were first used by the Leyland TD2 buses in 1932. The Bedford's replaced ex-Bullocks AEC Regal III and eight West Riding PS2 coaches. This was a sad occasion for me personally as quite a number of journeys to the coast had been made on these stalwart vehicles. Fortunately, Bedford VAL14 EHL 472D has survived in preservation but is not currently resident in Yorkshire.

Following the earlier decision to cancel the Wulfrunian's, a new generation of rear-engined buses entered service. The Leyland Atlantean now graced the streets of Wakefield and surrounding areas. These eye-catching buses had a new style of Roe body with large panoramic windows at the front, enabling the driver to view the nearside kerb more clearly. The staircase was built on the offside creating a larger platform compared to the Wulfrunian that had its staircase on the nearside directly

off the platform area. A disappointing feature was the destination aperture which was a large destination followed by the route numbers. I know it is picky, but I prefer numbers first and then the destination. The Atlanteans were issued with fleet numbers 101-113 (EHL 688-700D) wandering away from matching registration and fleet numbers. Although looking rather large they only seated 76 (H43/33F), one more than a Wulfrunian, although by this point steps were underway to reduce the upper deck seating capacity of the Wulfrunians by removing eight seats at the front to reduce stress on the front end.

Towards the end of the year another eleven Atlanteans had arrived 114-124 (FHL 763-773D) entering service from Belle Isle depot, where all the batch was based. Last to arrive was Atlantean 125 (FHL 774D) having had the distinction of visiting the Earls Court Commercial Motor Show as an exhibition vehicle. Like the Titan PD2 the Atlanteans were powered by a Leyland 0600 engine which was sluggish when setting off on the flat in second gear. Once they were mobile the speed was not to be scoffed at. If the truth be told I liked them. The Roe body did them justice, especially the engine shrouds (engine covers) although in later years these embellishments were removed spoiling the whole appearance of the bus. Although the Atlantean stronghold was Belle Isle depot, expeditions to other depots took place, sometimes resulting in a permanent stay. Atlantean 101-108 (EHL 688-695D) became regular performers on the 69/70 route which suggests they were a permanent fixture at Savile Street and/or Featherstone depot. Others departed for Castleford depot (not sure of the fleet numbers) but 121-125 (FHL 770-774D) became residents of Savile Street depot. Atlantean 125 appeared on one occasion on the Healey route where I managed to obtain a rear end shot from my state of the art Polaroid Land Camera (remember them?).

Work journeys to and from Dewsbury were sometimes made on Atlanteans (101-108). Spirited rides were to be had if the bus was running late. Rough rides could be experienced in inclement weather, gale force winds rocking the bus, partially blowing the large doors open, which shut with a bang. Operating on arduous routes, the Atlanteans were well tested, proving themselves by lasting in West Riding service until the early 1980's.

The first rear-engined single deckers arrived at about the same time as the last Atlantean. However, these did not remain in service very long. The new vehicles were a small batch of ten Daimler Roadliner's which had bodywork by Plaxton. With seating capacity for 50 passengers the Roadliner was almost equal to the capacity of a Leyland Titan or Guy Arab IV.

Fleet numbers were 126-135 (FHL 819-828D). Several journeys were made on 126 and 128 which appeared on the number 3 Cullingworth, which seemed to be a test route for new single deckers (normally the stomping ground for Reliance 707 and 714). I always thought the design of the Plaxton body, with the large metal Daimler badge and horizontal twin headlights on either side plus a central fog light underneath looked quite smart. Internally they had an unusual feature of the two seats over the rear wheel arch facing inwards rather than forwards, something which I think was unique to these vehicles.

Just like the Atlanteans the Roadliner's were slow off the mark. An unusual choice of engine was the Cummins V6. This was rather noisy but gave a fascinating sound when accelerating. Cummins Engines were a very popular large company in America and in 1963 they had opened a factory in Darlington where engines were built for both buses and wagons.

Belle Isle depot took charge of the Roadliner's which appeared on a variety of routes. Transfers to other depots, I would imagine, were few and far between and possibly not lasting long as the Cummins V6 engine encountered various problems resulting in breakdowns. A wiser choice of engine would have been a Gardner, but once again only in my opinion. Not many Roadliner's were built, production changing to a Fleetline single decker fitted with a Gardner engine.

Therefore, the Roadliner had a short life, the small batch belonging to the West Riding only lasting 7 years. Upon withdrawal several found extra life in service with other operators.

A final batch of lightweight coaches taken into stock in 1967 were Bedford VAM5 with Plaxton C45F bodywork and fleet numbers 13-18 (HHL 713-718E). They added a touch of class to the coaching stock with slightly upgraded interiors and different external trim to the earlier examples. These Bedford's only had a short service life all being withdrawn and sold on by 1971 finding new employment with other operators.

The next small batch of buses saw a return to AEC, with a new chassis the Swift, which had entered the market in 1966. When the Swifts arrived, they had bodywork by Marshall of Cambridge with dual purpose seating (DP47F) and fleet numbers in the coach series 19-24 (JHL 819-824E). Unfortunately, like the Roadliner, they became some of the most unreliable buses produced, which is a shame, and it pains me to say so, as I am an AEC enthusiast.

Appearing on the number 3 route, I was able to sample the Swift although on my first encounter the driver blew the horn and waved with his hand that the bus was full. On my second attempt all was well and I was able to climb on board. The dual-purpose seats were comfortable, and the Swift gave a good ride. Sounds from the AEC AV590 engine brought back memories of the Red Regent III's, with the large 9.6 engine.

I was not impressed with the bodywork. No offence towards Marshall of Cambridge, the manufacturer. The front of the bus seemed to lack thought or design style as though nothing had crossed their minds, not even a badge was displayed. However, the Swifts had only a short stay in Wakefield as they were destined to be transferred to Selby depot and soon the whole batch was resident there. Around 1970 the Swifts had returned to Belle Isle depot and the dual-purpose seats were removed and replaced by bus seats from withdrawn green Wulfrunians before they re-entered service. They did not live up to the name of Swift, just one extremity to another owing to the effects of regular breakdowns. One bus was out of service for over three months, parked up awaiting a spare part.

My journeys on the Swifts were very few and far between. However, in 1971 before I departed from Ossett leaving my past behind me, I was courting a young lady who lived in Morley (little did I know that she would become my supportive wife, now nearly 40 years). Returning home from Morley I had a choice of three different routes; Yorkshire Woollen service 5 to Dewsbury, Yorkshire Woollen service 46/47 to Ossett & West Riding service 20 to Wakefield, alighting at Manor Road. West Riding service 57 Wakefield & West Riding service 20 Ossett. West Riding service 71 Wakefield - Tingley, West Riding service 16 Horbury - Ossett & West Riding service 20 Wakefield - Manor Road.

A most unusual occurrence took place one night on my journey home on the number 16 service. The bus was a Swift number 21 (JHL 821E). As we approached the centre of Ossett (Horse & Jockey) the Swift changed down into third gear. Slowing down it then changed down into second gear at which point the engine cut out. The driver tried twice to start the engine, then he informed me that the bus had run short of fuel. Almost opposite the exit road from Ossett Bus Station, I was able to catch the 20 Wakefield service bus with ease.

Unfortunately, the Swifts had no luck whatsoever. They were unloved and languished out of use in Belle Isle depot back yard, on many occasions with messages on their windscreens "not for service". By 1976 all traces of the AEC Swift were gone from Wakefield. _TO BE CONTINUED >>>>>

R.I.P Andy "Paintpot" Powell

In the early hours of Saturday 15th January, Andy Powell passed away in hospital aged 61. Affectionately known to all as "Paintpot", Andy had been an integral part of the West Riding Omnibus Museum Preservation Society since its early days and had been a long-standing member of the Museum.

Andy was the eldest of three, with his younger brothers Glyn and Robert being well known to many of our members, particularly as after a serious road accident, Robert was left blind, and Andy cared for him. In later life Andy also took care of his elderly mum, who passed in 2018, this being the nature of the man!

He commenced his work career at Calderford Motor Company in Wakefield as an apprentice coach painter and following a successful apprenticeship found his way to Black Prince Buses, eventually moving to Firstbus in Leeds. Over many years he willingly shared his skills with other preservationists who were keen to "have a go".

Upon the discovery of a serious illness, Andy remained positive and continued his weekly Saturday visits to the museum to undertake the painting of many of our vehicles including, the PD2, the red

Wulf, the Panther, Ethel B and National2. He did this free of charge, perhaps only receiving his Saturday lunch time fish and chips as a reward. When he undertook the massive job of completing the full repaint, inside and outside of Mark's Guy Arab, he did so with no expectation of payment, but went on an overseas holiday as a surprise reward!!

He had a love of fast cars, turning up at the Museum in his BMW M3 and Jaguar XK8, but the measure of him meant that he was equally at home in an old Fiesta. His hobbies extended to lots of trainspotting, model railways, obviously buses, and socialising in his local, the Robin Hood at Altofts. Just prior to his illness taking hold, he could be found driving the Panther at our open days, having passed his PSV test many years ago.

His funeral on 1st February was well attended, and there was clearly a lot of affection for such a humble character who simply got on with the job, with no edge to him at all. We provided a guard of honour as he was brought into the Crematorium with the PD2 and Panther at the gates. His work is immortalised in many completed restorations within the building. His craftsmanship was second to none and can be seen within our collection of buses.



He will be sadly missed by his many friends at the Museum and will surely be remembered for his gentle kind nature – he was a proper gent, was Andy.

As a final tribute to Andy, First Leeds have named a bus in his honour. He would be chuffed.

How things used to be... in the old days!

Many of us would argue that one big thing is often missing from modern bus operation – PRIDE! The two photographs featured below somehow give a flavour of how things were run back in the late 1960's and early 1970's, when PRIDE in operating buses was king!! Member Michael Brook, takes up the story;



My good friend Allen Tidswell was a former employee of West Riding, and I have sent the attached photographs with this little story to give a flavour of how things were many years ago.

Allen started work at the age of 24 at West Riding's Featherstone Depot on 18th October 1969 and was issued with Conductor's badge number BB94072. Having previously worked in a factory, Alan had moved to live at Albert Street Featherstone, across the road from the depot, having recently married his wife, Nancy. A neighbour, Trevor Cavill, was already a Conductor and decided to recommend Allen as a suitable person to be employed.

His first run out on training duties was on service 183 – the then South Elmsall to Leeds route, when routes were longer than today with this one being exactly scheduled at 90

minutes from end to end. The driver was Jack Kenman and Doreen McClane was the Conductress. In later years Mary Carlyle was a well-known Conductress because she became the first West Riding female driver and subsequently the first West Riding Female Inspector.

Allen took his responsibilities seriously, and for a time he was the Trade Union Representative and still has his membership badge that expired in 1992, perhaps this being around the time he left West Riding, at this point being employed as a cash office clerk. Allen has many recollections, and his frequent job was Conducting the 69 service from Fairburn to Dewsbury via Wakefield and the 70 service from Kellingley to Dewsbury via Wakefield. Some duties were very straightforward whilst others are imprinted on his memory.....

One afternoon whilst conducting an Atlantean, it had become apparent that all was not well with the bus. The driver and Allen had requested a change of bus at Wakefield before heading to Dewsbury, where another request was made. Having been told no twice, they carried on until the bus struggled up Westgate in Wakefield until finally it gave up and burst into flames right outside the Theatre Royal. The passengers were evacuated, and the fire was extinguished and finally the Belle Isle recovery truck arrived. No replacement bus was provided, and the driver and Allen retreated to the bus station canteen whilst the Police dealt with the traffic mayhem right in rush hour – they were not impressed! Sid Stones had been driving the bus and was a regular driver that Allen worked with.

Winter brought different challenges and out on the 69/70 service again, Sid and Allen drove through a severe blizzard for many miles heading on the outward from Pontefract before deciding it was not safe to continue past Wakefield as they did not think it was wise to go down Dewsbury cutting. Terminating at Wakefield, with at least 6 inches of snow on the ground, they were asked to continue to Dewsbury but refused as they were severely behind schedule too but thought it would be best to head back to Featherstone at a slow safe pace.

With a full load of grateful passengers on board, the decision was taken to drop off and pick up passengers on downhill stops only. It was decided not to take the bus via the Cock and Crown at Crofton, due to the severe slope up the old Pontefract Road. Instead, the bus ran direct to Sharlston down the recently built new Pontefract Road. Upon arrival at Snydale Villas, a request was made for Allen's cap, and it was duly passed around the bus and a collection made for the crew because they had made the effort to get everyone home. Upon arrival at Featherstone, it was decided to go no further for safety reasons and in the spirit of PRIDE and goodwill, those wanting to go to Pontefract, including several nurses due on shift at Pontefract Infirmary, were offered lifts in cars by West Riding employees. A letter of thanks was duly sent from the Hospital thanking all those involved for going over and above what was expected.

Irregular incidents were fortunately not the norm but did happen. With Peter Asher at the wheel, a passenger collapsed on the bus and the bus was taken directly to Pontefract Infirmary casualty entrance on Southgate dual carriageway so that the passenger could be alighted straight into the accident and emergency department. Despite their efforts, the passenger unfortunately could not be saved but a letter of thanks was received for their sterling efforts to help. Allen had many experiences of different West Riding vehicles and well remembers an early run out on a Guy Arab IV on the Pontefract to Doncaster service via Darrington. Upon arrival at Doncaster, the driver mistakenly tried to enter the bus station via the Taxi entrance making the bus a convertible model! It appeared that new signs advising drivers of height restrictions had not been installed!

On cold winter days Allen recalls that the Wulfrunian's were the best buses to keep warm in due to the position of the engine and he regarded them as a well-thought out design, if only they had been reliable! He also remembers that the Arab's, by contrast, were the most reliable models in the fleet.

Having worked at Featherstone, Allen did feel that Belle Isle and Castleford depot staff often looked down on their colleagues at the former B&S outpost and throughout his time employed, both Featherstone and Savile Street were always referred to as B&S, right up until their closures. So, what of the photographs at the beginning of this article?

Allen was asked on two occasions to attend Driver Training courses and the photographs show those attending said courses. In the first shot, they are lined up next to a Wulfrunian, and on the second one, a Bristol FLF. Featherstone based driver training vehicles during this period consisted of anything that was available, however Allen recalls that GHL 726, an open platform ArabIV, number 777, perhaps chosen for its lucky number, had been modified with a hinge on the partition window behind the driver to allow it to be opened so instructions could be issued to the driver in training. Driving was not for Allen, and he failed to complete the training, but clearly has great memories of his time with West Riding, despite his decision not to drive the buses!!



To complete this story Allen and his friend Michael visited the Museum and the photograph shows Allen reacquainting himself with Mark's ArabIV, KHL 855, a type of bus he remembers very well. Note that he is ready for action with his Conductor badge, number BB94072, proudly displayed!

50 years apart

Having just celebrated our Golden Jubilee, one of our members sent in this shot to mark 50 years between the two Lego bus models!"



We are reliably informed that the one on the left is the 2021 version, apparently costing £130 compared to the one on the right bought in 1971, which whilst somewhat smaller, only cost pence.

The final bit – information please

Thanks to Paul Goldthorpe for supplying this image.



Left – a West Riding Tramways sign

What is the history of this sign, where was it positioned and how old is it??