

WEST RIDING OMNIBUS DEWSBURY BUS MUSEUM WEST RIDING OMNIBUS MUSEUM TRUST

The newsletter of Dewsbury Bus Museum and the West Riding Omnibus Museum Trust

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Winter 2024-2025

Editorial

The sad news that Arriva has had to vacate the Belle Isle depot and works in Wakefield at short notice due to major safety issues, to be followed by demolition of the buildings, presumably due to some serious but unspecified structural faults, reminds us that bus preservation and history is far more than just the buses and coaches themselves. The Belle Isle site has been in use continuously since 1904, when the Yorkshire (West Riding) Electric Tramways opened. These buildings saw out the entire electric tram era in Wakefield and will have seen every type of bus and coach bought new by the West Riding Automobile Company which followed, and probably most of those it took over from other operators too. What happens to the site is open to a lot of speculation at present, but it reminds us that history is disappearing all the time.

In the railway preservation arena, deep pockets have allowed the recreation of a number of steam locomotives which never made it into preservation, such as A1 60163 "Tornado", the Bluebell Railway's Brighton Atlantic, and the Great Western Society's "Saint" and "Grange", not to mention working replicas of locomotives of the early nineteenth century, such as "Locomotion" and "Rocket", with many more to come. In the world of bus and coach preservation such occurrences are rare, and while there are some vehicles around with new replica bodies on old chassis, I don't believe that a complete authentic replica has yet been built.

Enjoy the vehicles, the depots and all of the other facets of our fascinating hobby while you can. Once they have gone they won't be back. So let's cherish what we have.



A couple of photos taken on Sunday 11 November showing scaffolding in place to support the end walls of parts of the Arriva (former West Riding) depot and works at Belle Isle, Wakefield.

On behalf of Dewsbury Bus Museum and the West Riding Omnibus Preservation Society
I would like to wish you all a very happy and enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year

Open Day – 22 September

Mark Byard reports on the recent Autumn Running Day and has also provided some photos too.

Sunday 22 September saw the Museum hold its Autumn Running Day.

The day started off dry and the weather looked promising, but by mid-afternoon the drizzle had moved in, which undoubtedly drove some visitors back into the Museum building, much to the delight of the traders who had set up their wares in every available space. There was no shortage of choice for avid memorabilia fans, with more traders present than before.

Due to several vehicles being decommissioned for work to be carried out, and the reducing number of actively involved members, a decision had to be taken to reduce the floor space usually occupied by the Café, Tombola and WROPS stalls. Sadly, Bus & Coach Preservation Magazine were unable to attend the open day due to a previous booking in the Midlands, but it meant that the WROPS stall could be moved into their usual space and the Café and Tombola were squeezed between the green Wulf and the Dalesman.

We normally push disabled buses outside by hand to create space on open days, but as we have said many times before, with decreasing numbers of active volunteers who are willing to give up time on no more than three days a year, tough choices must be made.

Thanks must go to Trustee Di Forbes for taking on the running of the Café, supported by Lola, after Mark Byard gave up looking after this area after ten years of providing hot and cold food and beverages to the masses! Thanks also to Trustee Andy Hartley's wife and daughter, Emma and Isobel, who took on the running of the Tombola.

The bus display area was set up early outdoors and was ready for action. One concern is always the truck deliveries to Homebargains and Heron Foods, but this seemed to go smoothly with no issues arising.

Supporting the running day with buses in service were WROPS, who provided Panther 164 and PD2 640, Mark Byard who provided his Arab IV 855 and Ethel coach 725, Kieron Patterson with his West Riding Lynx 252 and the NWVRT who provided a lovely Atlantean and Duple-bodied Tiger. These vehicles covered the services admirably, which ran every twenty minutes down into Dewsbury and back. Several duplicates were required due to heavy loadings and as can be seen in the shots, queues were the order of the day.



It is clear from the reducing number of visiting buses that the bus preservation movement is entering a new phase of change. In some respects, it is always disappointing when other bus museums and groups that receive support from us, often with our buses in service at their events, do not return the favour. There could be many issues for this, including the cost of fuel, lack of drivers, disrespect of owners and their vehicles by certain enthusiasts, or just a failure of the movement to change with the times.

As one vehicle owner said, *"I have always been happy to let the public travel on my pride and joy in the past, and I allow it for no personal financial gain. However, there seems to be an increasing number of rally visitors who expect everything for nothing and a good example of this is their failure to drop some coins in a collection tin to assist the Museum in its endeavours to support their hobby - how disappointing. In this scenario I would be better to just enjoy my vehicle with my own friends and avoid potential damage and wear and tear."*

The proliferation of bus running days may well have literally "run" its course and the once old-fashioned static display event may be on the return. Looking at some other Museum activity there has certainly been a marked decline in the scale of running events in recent years.

Finally, a huge thank you must go to every one of our volunteers who made things happen on the day.

Report and photos by Mark Byard.



Vehicle Updates

There may be some space available in the Museum in 2025 for members or groups who have vehicles which they would like to be located in the Museum.

Any members or groups who may be interested in applying for a vehicle space in the Museum during 2025 should follow the process detailed in the "Allocation of Vehicle Space" policy as detailed on the Museum website.

Any interested parties should notify the Trust by 31st January 2025.

No vehicle updates have been received for this issue unfortunately. This section requires information from vehicle owners and caretakers, so if you own or look after a bus or coach, please can you send in your updates and photos.

Annual General Meeting

The WROMT AGM took place on Monday 9 December and John Wade was elected as Health & Safety Officer. Martin Cotton and David Flasher were upgraded to Full Membership after many years of dedicated service to the Trust. Congratulations to all of you.

The review of the last year was presented by Julie Aylward, the Honorary Secretary, and is included below.

'This year has been another challenging year for the trust. Progress on a replacement building has ground to a halt as other issues have taken priority. Hopefully, once these have been resolved, this project will gather speed in the new year.'

'Sadly, three members have passed away this year; founder member Leo Pratt, long-time member Ian (Jock) Hunter and Andrew Pickles. Our thoughts are with their friends and families.'

'The Spring Running Day was held on 19th May. Visitor numbers were slightly down, but the overall takings were very similar to last year's event.'

'In July the Batley Community Bus Day was a great success and so will be repeated next year. The event was aimed at the community, rather than enthusiasts and attracted over 300 visitors. We were supported by members of the West Riding Bus Group who provided ex-West Riding Leyland Lynx 252 for the trips to Birstall and back.'

'The Autumn Running Day on 22nd September was also a success. Visitor numbers were again slightly down but the takings were slightly up. A lack of volunteers on the day restricted some of the activities but again, the numbers were on target.'

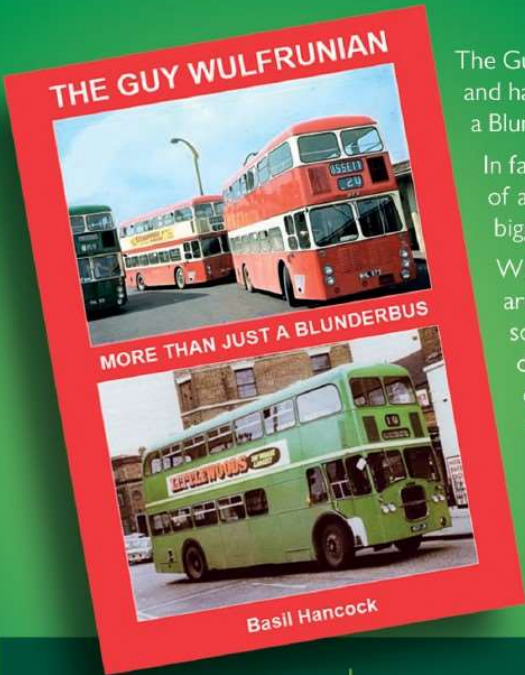
'It was decided to change the dates of our Spring and Autumn events to the equivalent dates that we used to hold them. These will be 30 March and 2 November at the museum and 6 July at The Mill Outlet, Batley.'

'Work has slowed down on restoring vehicles with Reliance 803 having major problems with the sump, Wulfrunian 970 having problems with the brakes, Wulfrunian 995 having handbrake cable problems and Albion 81 having door operating problems. Mike Bennett is still making progress on Reliance 808 and Tony Hanson continues to move CCX 801 forward with the help of John Wade and David Hudson.'

'Following legal advice, the trust had had to terminate the zero-fee licences previously enjoyed by the West Riding Omnibus Preservation Society. This has resulted in the society offering to transfer all the assets and liabilities to the trust. However, the trustees decided that this would not be in the best interests of the trust and so have turned down the offer.'

'The next year offers great opportunities for the trust. It is up to us all to grasp them.'

The Museum committee have been kind enough to allow me to include an advert for my recently published book on the Guy Wulfrunian, for which I thank them. It's not cheap, but it's big and heavy and all proceeds will go to the Museum for the upkeep of 970 and 995. It sold out in mid-December but additional copies will be available towards the end of January 2025.



The Guy Wulfrunian is generally considered to have been a disaster on wheels and has nearly always been described in a negative way. But was it really such a Blunderbus? In reality there were many worse bus disasters around.

In fact the West Riding examples were once attaining the highest mileages of any buses in the fleet and the Wulfrunian went on to leave a much bigger legacy than is generally realised.

With a low floor, air suspension and disc brakes, the Wulfrunian had what are today considered as standard features - but nearly half a century too soon. More than 15,000 double-deck buses used suspension systems derived directly from the Wulfrunian, and even the much-criticised engine position was copied by around 2,400 double-deckers which followed it.

In principle there was nothing wrong with the Wulfrunian. Its main problems were that its manufacturer was financially strapped and could never afford the time or money to fully develop the bus, while in the absence of any other manufacturers following suit at the time, its specialised parts were expensive and hard to obtain.

£49.50

416 pages
around 600 illustrations
100 specially drawn layouts

post-free (UK) only from
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In this new self-published A4 hardback book, Basil Hancock, a semi-retired bus designer, engineer and fleet manager, an unashamed fan of the Wulfrunian and a former owner of one of the two preserved examples, tells the full story, the good and the bad.

A Christmas Quiz

To while away the dull winter evenings, here is a little quiz for you.

How many rear-engined bus and coach models did Leyland produce?

The answer is on page 15. It might surprise you. No prizes, it's just for fun.

To simplify it we will leave out Mk2 or updated models. So for instance Atlantean will cover all PDR, AN68 and AN69 models, and National will cover both the National Mk1 and Mk2 variants. The same applies for the Lynx Mk.

To help you on your way with the quiz, here is one model, a Royal Tiger Doyen. This is prototype B50-01, brand new at Leyland on 19 December 1981 after its secret overnight delivery run from Charles H Roe in Leeds, where it was built. *(Basil Hancock)*



If any reader would like to submit one or more questions, it might be fun to have a regular quiz in each issue. Over to you.

West Riding Guy Arab IV Overall Heights

In the Autumn 2023 Newsletter there was a photo of West Riding Roe-bodied lowbridge Guy Arab IV 855 (KHL855) and 778 (GHL727) showing some apparent differences between their bodies. A similar photo showing 855 (KHL855) and 769 (GHL718) is shown below left. The photo is from the John Sandom collection held in the Museum archive. In the Spring 2024 issue the editor provided some thoughts about the differences, including questioning whether the two bodies were mounted at the same height.

On page 12 of issue 102, a photo taken by the editor (below right) showing Arab IV 784 (HHL996) has resulted in a comment that the five HHL-registered buses (782-786, HHL994-998) were built specially to a lower height than normal lowbridge Arabs for services passing under the very low railway bridge at Fitzwilliam on the 83 route towards Havercroft.



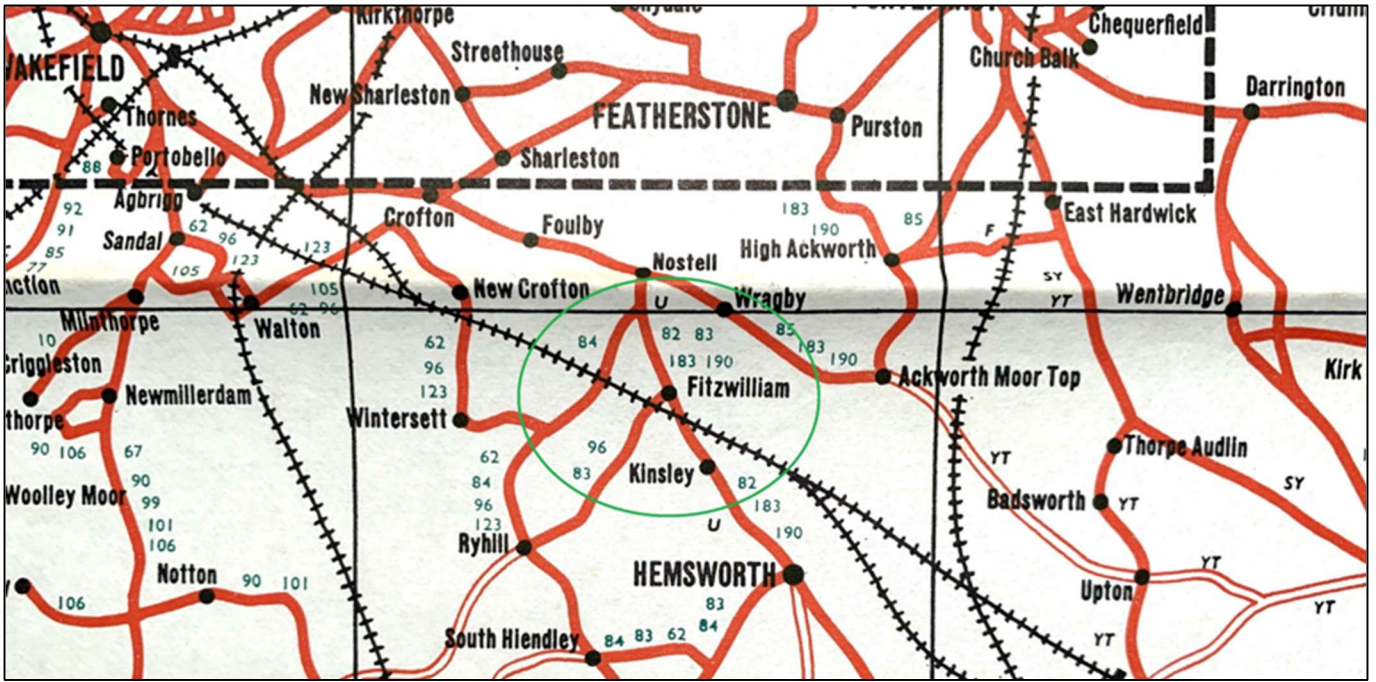
The photo below, taken from Google Maps, shows the Fitzwilliam bridge today, still with a 13'3" height limit. It seems amazing that double-deckers could get underneath it.



The location of the bridge is shown on the July 1968 route map on the next page, together with the timetable for the same date below. It should be noted that the 96 route terminated before the west side of the bridge (the far side in the view above) at Newstead Estate, although the map does not make this clear, and so did not pass under the bridge.

Service 83 WAKEFIELD · NEWSTEAD · SOUTH HIENDLEY · HEMSWORTH					Table 57	
Operated by West Riding.						
Mondays to Saturdays				Sundays		
		NS				
WAKEFIELD, Bus Station	dep	0655	0750 0855	2055	0955 and 2156	
Crofton, Cock & Crown	"	0708	0802 0908	and 2108	1008 2208	
Nostell, Priory Gates	"	0715	0808 0915	every 2115	1015 every 2215	
Newstead, Hatfield Place	"	0721	0814 0921	two 2121	1021 2221	
Ryhill, Havercroft Green	"	0724	0817 0924	hours 2124	1024 hour 2224	
South Hiendley, Fox	"	0729	0822 0929	until 2129	1029 2229	
HEMSWORTH, Cross Hill	arr	0737	0829 0937	2137	1037 until 2237	
HEMSWORTH, Cross Hill	dep	0611	2211		1211 and 2211	
South Hiendley, Fox	"	0619	and 2219		1219 2219	
Ryhill, Havercroft Green	"	0624	every 2224		1224 every 2224	
Newstead, Hatfield Place	"	0627	two 2227		1227 2227	
Nostell, Priory Gates	"	0633	hours 2233		1233 hour 2233	
Crofton, Cock & Crown	"	0640	until 2240		1240 2240	
WAKEFIELD, Bus Station	arr	0653	2253		1253 until 2253	
ADDITIONAL JOURNEYS — SATURDAYS ONLY						
NEWSTEAD, Hatfield Place	dep	1211	1711			
Ryhill, Havercroft Green	"	1214	and 1714			
South Hiendley, Fox	"	1219	1719			
HEMSWORTH, Cross Hill	arr	1227	every 1727			
HEMSWORTH, Cross Hill	dep	1153	hour 1653			
South Hiendley, Fox	"	1201	until 1701			
Ryhill, Havercroft Green	"	1206	until 1706			
NEWSTEAD, Hatfield Place	arr	1209	1709			

CODE NS—Not Saturday. Operates during Hemsworth Grammar School term only.



The low height of the HHL batch is confirmed by a comment by Stuart Goldthorpe in his "West Riding the Green Buses" booklet, which suggested that they were only 13'3" high. Interestingly, a National Bus Company description of the West Riding Guy Arabs claimed that the overall height was only 13'1 1/2", although it has to be said that this is almost bordering on fantasy.

The very lowest double decker built in the UK was the famed Barton Northern Counties-bodied Dennis Loline, claimed to have an overall height of just 12'6". However, its lowbridge body was built on a Dennis Loline chassis which provided a floor nearly a foot lower than the Guy Arab IV, so it is difficult to see how the claimed height could have been achieved in the Arab buses.

One of this batch, 783, is seen below in Wakefield bus station in a photograph provided by Mark Byard. It seems surprising, when overall height was such an issue, that external ventilators were provided on top of the roof. Deletion of these would have saved a couple of inches. In this view the roof profile seems to be no flatter than other Guy Arabs in the fleet.



Given the layout of a typical lowbridge Arab IV and the fact that lowbridge buses usually had the minimum legal gangway headroom on both decks (5'10" lower deck and 5'8" in the sunken gangway upstairs), plus usually about half an inch for tolerance, there seems to be little that could be done to further reduce the overall height. The standard West Riding Arab IVs already had a slightly dished lower deck gangway floor, to provide perhaps another inch reduction in overall height.

Comparing 783 (previous page) and 769 (below), the upper deck seems to be the same, so a flatter roof profile does not appear to be the solution, although the cream band beneath the destination box seems to be slightly narrower on the HHL. But note that on the nearside the canopy is slightly lower than the top of the driver's windscreen and is apparently the same depth as on the GHL.



What seems to have happened is that, because the top of the driver's windscreen on the HHL is higher and intrudes into what would normally be the centre cream band, it was decided to make the front cream band narrower and to have a green strip below it on the front canopy, rather than to have a step in the band on the nearside. This is perhaps clearer on the view of 784 below,



Meanwhile the centre cream band appears to be the same depth on the sides of both buses, implying that the upper deck structures are indeed the same.

However, the cream band below the lower deck waist rail appears to be slightly closer to the front wheelarch on the HHL, which may imply that the body was set slightly lower, presumably requiring a more pronounced sunken lower deck gangway. This may be confirmed by the fact that the heights of the driver's doors seem to differ in relation to both the lower and centre cream bands, and the front windscreen on the HHL is certainly at a different height relative to the driver's side window.

This leads to the conclusion that the HHL body was set lower than standard, whereas the driver's cab, which could not be lowered as its floor and pedals were part of the chassis, remained at the same height as in the GHL. This would almost certainly have required either a sunken or a dished gangway in the lower deck.

To show what is meant, a sunken gangway was used in Bristol LD Lodekkas, including those operated by West Riding (below left), whereas the later F-series Lodekkas (below right) used a dished lower gangway, as shown here in a rear-entrance FS.



As a matter of interest, similar sunken gangways were used by Eastern Coachworks for 13'5" Bristol VRTs, whereas the standard 13'8" buses had flat floors. For comparison, the interior of a 13'8" VR is seen below left with a flat gangway floor, and on the right is the 13'5" version with a sunken gangway.

Those with keen eyes will spot that the bus on the left is actually one of the two VRL prototypes of 1966, with the engine lengthwise behind the rear offside wheels. This bus was originally Central SMT BN331, later Bristol Omnibus C5000, and had the very first VR chassis of all. It was photographed by the editor in August 1974 when, with the second VRL bus, formerly Bristol Omnibus C5001, it was operating for Osborne of Tollesbury in Essex. Although a batch of VRL buses was built for South Africa, complete with second staircase and rear exit, these two were the only bus VRLs operated in the UK, all others being the Standerwick coaches. Sadly both were scrapped just a few years later. What a loss to preservation.

The VRT was former Cumberland Motor Services VRTSL3 406 and was photographed 12,000 miles from home in Dunedin, in the South Island of New Zealand, in 2019.



So given that the five HHL Guy Arabs were indeed lower than normal, what did West Riding do to ensure that no other double deckers tried to get under the bridge? Apparently little or nothing.

In the earlier days of eight foot wide buses, many operators fitted cream or white steering wheels to remind the drivers that the buses were wider than normal. Was there a sign or some other method of identification in the cab of these low Arabs, or did the company just hope that the vehicles were correctly rostered and the drivers would remember. A case of just hoping and riding their luck?

As a result, did any normal lowbridge buses ever come to grief under the bridge, and did the lowheight Wulfrunians, Atlanteans, Fleetlines and VRTs that followed ever have any issues?

The answer to that question is yes, as in later years a Bristol VRT did attempt to pass beneath the bridge - and did actually make it. However, a few days later it became apparent that the roof had been deeply gouged out and when it started raining the water poured in and the driver was "found out". He apparently used the excuse that his running board had detailed he should terminate at Ryhill LE, which meant Ryhill Lakeside Estate, however he said he thought it meant Ryhill Lane End.

Early Days on the Buses

The RTHA has very kindly given permission for four articles, originally published by the RRTHA in 2008-2009, on the memories of William H Baines, to be reproduced in West Riding Omnibus.

This is the third instalment compiled by David Allen (who also wrote the two Venture Publications Super Prestige books on West Riding) and comprises Bill Baines' recollections of his time with B&S Motor Services of Wakefield:

Sincere thanks are expressed to the RTHA.

Part 3 - Split Shifts to Split Pins

Garage Initiation

I can't remember the exact date on which I reported to the garage, but it was before the move to a new garage further along Saville Street.

The only clue is that it was just before the first Leyland double-deckers arrived in 1931. These replaced three PLSC Lions on the Wakefield/Castleford route and I never conducted on them.

In 1928, nine PLSC3 Lions arrived. Three of them were supplied as chassis only and had bodies built by Carl, the company coachbuilder. 80-85 had Leyland bodies and 86-88 had the locally-built bodies.



Fleet number 83 was a Leyland-bodied Lion PLSC3 delivered in March 1928. It was withdrawn in 1939 and passed in November of that year to the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) in Bridlington for use as an ambulance. It was sold to a Bridlington dealer, Wilson & Hughes, in December 1945 and is not recorded after that time.

Since starting with B&S, I had never ventured beyond the office door until 'reporting garage 8.00am'. With little opportunity for conductors to communicate, I was unaware of what 'report garage' fully meant, except as a form of standby in the event of absenteeism.

When arriving and leaving for a changeover at the garage office, I'd noticed conductors on 'report' seated in a bus, halfway up the garage. Also, on occasion, there appeared to be conductor activity in the vicinity of the water butt.

Compared with conductor hours, which varied from 6.00am to midnight, garage hours were akin to office hours, i.e. 8.00am to 5.30pm, break 12.00 to 1.00pm, with alternate Saturdays and Sundays at reduced hours.

I duly reported Monday morning. George handed cloths and a tin of Brasso polish saying, 'they'll tell you what to do'. 'They' being two fellow conductors already sat at ease in a Lion.

None of us were in uniform. Both my companions had been on garage report before and were familiar changeover faces.

Except Saturdays, there were always buses in the garage. It was a problem trying to put a shine on a Lion radiator, still damp from overnight washing. Having polished all radiators present, we started again, making a pretence of it.

There was nothing to polish inside a Leyland bodied Lion, they had a compressed air warning bell system with chrome-plated push buttons. Later Leylands (TS2 and LT1) nos. 95 and 96, bodied by Barnsley, were a Brasso bonanza. Chrome fittings were profuse, with lighting in the form of chrome-plated torches down each side.

Meanwhile, inside and outside our single-decker bus, the sound and movement of a working garage was everywhere. From the two inspection pits and workbench, there were both metallic and human noises.

Engine covers were tossed aside, probing fingers adjusted with spanners - a form of scalpel performance. But, no convalescence, just a disrespectful reverse from the garage, a drive past the Wakefield Asylum along Stanley Road, before returning to the garage, passed fit for service.

With no intercom, communication between the office and inspection pit was by verbal foot power. Mechanics in blue boiler overalls and cloth cap made infrequent visits to the stores.

There was no storekeeper. Teddy Bullock, the garage manager, in full golfing rig, often seemed to take off and gather speed to confer with Jack Black, garage foreman, for whatever reason. Jack was a first class foreman - Lancastrian and ex-Leyland man.

From a seat in the bus, I watched, with envy, midday changeover crews come and go. There were no tea-making facilities for us, so I had no option but to eat my sandwiches and have a walk around town.

At 5.30pm, I returned my Brasso and cloths to the office and pedalled home at the end of a boring day. Fortunately my baptism in garage duty did not take place in winter, as the garage folding doors remained wide open.

Garage Routine - The Learning Curve

Another morning of 'report garage' routine followed. Brasso and cloths with colleagues chit-chatting. Teddy and Jack making an occasional appearance and Sam hosing down the concrete.

For me, another boring day until the arrival of a young mechanic hauling a four-wheeled station type luggage cart. He came to a halt by the bulbous water tank and hose point. One of the polishers collected the Brasso and clothes, headed to the office and returned with a bundle of clean, unsoiled cloths. I could see activity by the petrol pump.

A large, galvanised rectangular tray about six inches deep was half-full with petrol. This was carried and deposited by the water tank without a drop being spilt. The trolley was loaded with various bus engine parts, much bigger in size than our Austin Seven parts.

The 'report' conductors now became cleaners. Every part had to be sterilised in petrol and those encrusted with a mixture of oil and road dust hosed with water.

By the end of the day, my trouser legs and shoes were saturated. No protective clothing was issued and the smell of petrol clung all the way home on my cycle. Out came the tin bath and my clothes were immersed in cold water prior to being washed.

The next day I arrived at the garage in winter boots, discarded trousers and coat with a khaki shirt and collar. I wore my uniform cap in case I was called on to conduct.

Apparently, Tuesday was programmed for engine parts washing. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were Brasso days. Saturday was 'report 12.00 noon' to conduct a 'special' and Sunday (when on) was 'kicking your heels' duty in the garage from 8.00am to 3.00pm.

Mechanical Intuition

I was into my third week of 'garage report', there might have been other Brasso buff replacements, I cannot remember. But I do remember taking a particular interest in engine parts cleaning; having mastered hosepipe technique and therefore dry trousers.

My interest in the internal combustion engine began before leaving school. Knowledge of traction and friction was the basis of Meccano, a bicycle, Rex Acme two-stroke motorcycle and an Austin Seven. All contributed to my inherent and avid interest in anything mechanical.

There were occasions, when conducting, when my driver would remove the engine cover and listen to the tick over. This was a golden opportunity for me to scrutinise a bus engine at close quarters.

Looking back, it was appropriate I was standing by a Leyland PLSC1 when Jack Black made his way from the inspection pits between parked buses to where I was polishing. He stopped and asked if I was Billy Baines. When I said, 'yes', he directed me to take that 'stuff' (polish/cloths) into the office, which I did and retraced my steps to the inspection pits.

Jack looked up and came to meet me with, 'get t'brush and give benches and floor a sweep'. When the staff were packing up at the end of the shift, Jack gave me orders for next morning. 'Come straight up here and see me'. On my way out, the next day's rota read 'W Baines report garage'.

The Monday morning was my brief initiation into the hallowed precincts of bus mechanics. I arrived with mechanics already there, armed with hand carried toolboxes. Jack was allocating work.

A PLSC1 was parked up to a workbench, another was over the central pit. For the moment, being my own boss as it were, I collected a sweeping brush, hand brush and shovel and went to work. Being freelance, gave me the opportunity to see and hear men working with buses.

It took me three weeks to assess my changed status within the Bullock dynasty. I never knew the real reason for my transfer. When I enquired, I was met with 'just do as you are told'. I served no apprenticeship – and proved it was irrelevant. I retired from the rota sheet, was given a clock card and my cap with its polished badge was never worn again.

Brushwork continued to be my priority and I suggested scraping the oil and dirt coating from the floor, which pleased Jack - point scored.

The mechanics were from various backgrounds, ex-naval craft, ex-Western Front, ex-publican and a number of ex-conductors like myself. All specialised in certain areas, electrical, body repairs and building, an ex-Leeds conductor was a first class painter.

I was 'borrowed' one Friday night by the electrician to top up batteries. Non-stop through the night gave me an opportunity to see the cleaners at work with cold water, sponges, mop and brushes, then an unofficial break, in winter round a stove. The lubrication man, also an ex-Leeds conductor, was an authority on grease nipples with back axle lubricant warmed on a primus stove.

A full overhaul was carried out by six mechanics, three painters, an electrician and joiner. Priority was given to engine removal part by part with a block and tackle for the remainder. Four axle jacks anchored the bus (mostly Lions) clear of the floor with the removal of everything else, wheels axle shafts, brake drums, etc.

I was appointed Keeper of Engine Parts and the washing thereof. The parts were transported to the water butt, where 'report' conductors washed and hosed per my instructions.

Meanwhile my services were required where the action was. Cylinder blocks, heads, crankcase, shafts and connecting rods, valves, etc, were not water butt material, but washed in trays of petrol.

All these parts were prepared for further internal work or packed for shipment to Isles of Stanningley, the local Leyland agent for reconditioning.

It was at the petrol washing session that I became acquainted with Ron Brook, second in command and also a perfectionist. 'Now then Bainesy, have you got....'

I ignored him until I eventually, and respectfully, informed him that my name was Baines not Bainesy. He even apologised.

(Ron Brook eventually moved to West Riding Auto. Was he the person who become the Chief Engineer with the same name - except with an "e" on the end of his surname - who played a major role in the Wulfrunian bus development?)



An early B&S Leyland Tiger, unfortunately unidentified. It is one of six supplied with Leyland's own bodywork.

The Lion gearbox did not become part of my cleaning as it was left to the mechanics.

Some of my assignments took me out of the garage. Welding went to Barretts and brass parts to Arthur Ellis, a short distance away.

Meanwhile, my status as the new entrant into the mechanic hierarchy progressed.

Every Monday I became guide and mentor to the parts cleaning department. My first bench job was grinding valves and I was later assigned to George Teal to assist in renewing brake linings.

When engine parts returned from Isles, I had the job of carefully returning them to the engine stands for reassembly by Jack and Ron. When the next delivery arrived, I was given the task of assisting Ron on the engine stand, and from then continued to do so.

My next task was stocktaking before the move to the new garage. I was asked if I had ever done it before and of course I had, at Egglestones, for a number of years. A clipboard and pencil was given to stores with its shelved compartments of nuts and bolts.

Taking stock of the fleet, I entered Lion, short or long (PLSC1 and 3), and the fleet number. My stock take eventually complete, it was back to normality. With brushwork under control, there was more time for the spanners.

On The Move

The move to the new garage just up the road went smoothly and without interruption to daily servicing.

Our new premises were a replica of the old garage, except that they were more spacious with roof glass giving generous light and sun, but the old garage still remained in use.

There were two inspection pits. One took two buses, and the other three. Both had recessed electrical points. The floor space, compared to the old garage, was vast and would require sweeping - in which case who was going to be sweeper?

About this time, the Wakefield B&S Sports Club was formed and a contribution of three pence was deducted from our wages.

Teddy Bullock became the driving force behind this social enterprise. Soccer was first on the agenda with training on Heath Common.

Established in our new working quarters, life took on a different format. There was a whiff of new timber, a feeling of unlimited space, dissipating the odour of used oil and petrol. In due course there grew a feeling of isolation from the old garage office, except for clocking in/out.

For me, drivers and conductors known and unknown, became strangers. Jack discarded his cap and brown overall in favour of collar and tie complete with trilby. The office claimed more of Jack's time as the fleet increased.

Jack called me to the office and told me to work with Ron who was regarded as the senior mechanic. Ron greeted me at the engine stand - obviously prearranged. Had Ron found me receptive, fertile ground for further technical planting?

Work at the engine stand began with the return of engine parts from Isles, including crankshafts, etc. Ron taught me the ins and outs of everything, which included the bedding of main bearings.

As time went on, Lions and the new Tigers from Leyland came and went through major overhauls.

When the engine and components had been fitted, other people installed the engine back into the chassis. My services were directed elsewhere, either a solo commission or as assistant.

Work included servicing autovacs, cleaning or renewing spark plugs, taking up brakes or checking rocker to valve end clearance.

To be continued.

Badge Engineering

Following publication of issue 102, the editor received an email regarding the caption to the photo on page 13, in which he had inadvertently referred to preserved Darwen Corporation Crossley Regent V as coming from Darwin, which is of course in the Northern Territory of Australia. Red faces all round!



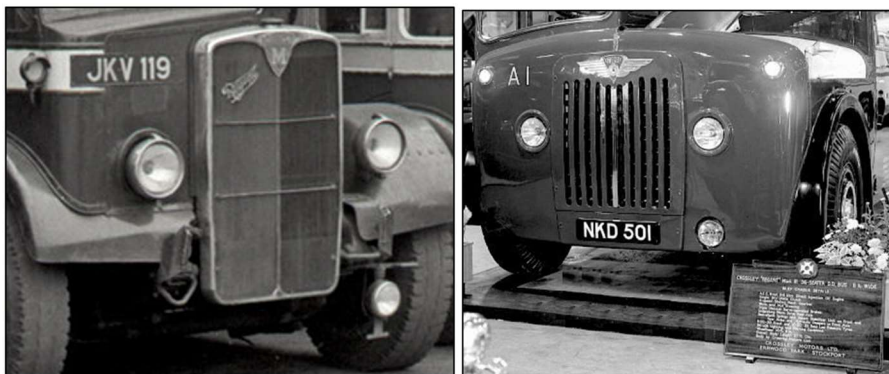
In fact, although built by AEC at Southall, Darwen Corporation 17 was indeed badged as a Crossley. Darwen had been a keen user of Crossleys, and for some reason wanted to keep the name in the fleet, so as well as 17 it also persuaded AEC to deliver three Crossley Reliances, 18-20. All four buses had East Lancs bodies, built in nearby Blackburn.

Former Darwen Crossley Reliance 18 is seen (below left) in a Barnsley scrapyard. Not surprisingly its AEC-Crossley badge had already been souvenired. Presumably, as the shadow on the front panel suggests, it was a standard AEC winged badge with the AEC triangle replaced by the Crossley triangle, as shown above on the Regent V. Just for the record, some proper Crossley badges are shown (below right), although there were quite a few variations on the theme.



This was by no means the only badge engineering which AEC undertook. In 1951, in order to keep Coventry Corporation (or more particularly its councillors) happy, it assembled nine Regent III chassis at its Maudslay plant at Daventry, just outside Coventry, and these were duly badged as Maudslays. 119 is shown below left, with the Maudslay "M" badge at the top of the radiator.

Meanwhile in 1953 AEC produced Regent III A1 (NKD 501) for Liverpool Corporation (below right), complete with Crossley body and a Liverpool-designed front incorporating a Birmingham New Look grille. It too was badged as a Crossley, and this time the subterfuge was taken further. Although hard to read in this image, the descriptive plaque at the bottom is headed "Crossley Regent".



It should be noted that the New Look front, familiar in West Yorkshire on, amongst others, West Riding Guy Arabs, some Bradford AEC Regent IIIs and Halifax and Leeds Daimler CVG6s, was originally developed for Birmingham City Transport and used on buses delivered to them by Crossley, Daimler and Guy. It was subsequently used widely by Daimler and Guy and, to a lesser extent, AEC and Dennis, although the Dennis version was not a totally accurate copy.

AEC also exhibited a Crossley Regal IV at the Commercial Motor Show at Earls Court in, I think, 1952. The show had strict limits on the number of vehicles any supplier could exhibit, so by rebadging the Regal IV they sneaked in an extra vehicle.

Similarly, Bury Guy Wulfrunian 101, although bodied by Charles H Roe, was exhibited as a Park Royal product at the 1960 show for the same reason. You can just make out the Park Royal Vehicles Ltd name in the lower deck window.



Incidentally, Park Royal and Roe, also Crossley and Maudslay, were all part of the AEC-owned ACV (Associated Commercial Vehicles) group, which explains why these names were used.

AEC's badge engineering didn't end here as it sold most of its products in South America as ACLOs. However, this was due to objections from the giant German electrical firm AEG, which was concerned about possible confusion. Why only in South America and not in other markets is a mystery.



AEC was not alone. Leyland badged nearly all English Albion Lowlanders as Leylands, including the Yorkshire Woollen District examples. Below are three South Notts Northern Counties-bodied Albion Lowlanders. 87 and 82 are badged as Leylands, but 89, the last Lowlander, was specially fitted with an Albion badge as the very last Albion double-deck chassis built.



At the same time Leyland badged some Titans and Atlanteans for Glasgow Corporation as Albions (the Albion plant was in Glasgow), so this kept the Corporation happy.

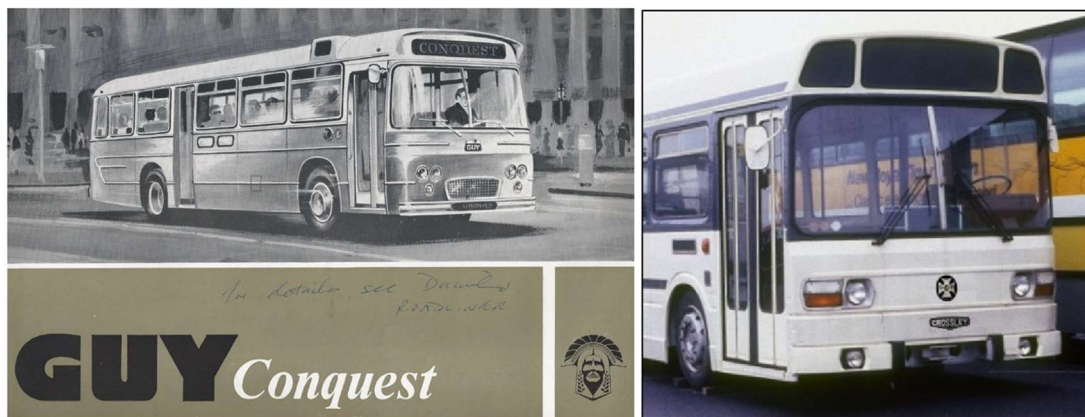


A very few Atlanteans sold to Scottish independents also carried Albion badges, but nearer to home Severn, Dunscroft, Atlantean XWU890G also carried an Albion badge for reasons unknown – perhaps it was a diverted order – and even entered the South Yorkshire PTE fleet with the badge still intact. In the image below, by Roger Townend, it is seen in 1979 in Christ Church Road, Doncaster. Note that its Roe body had the flat recessed single windscreen fitted to some bodies in that period and it was also unusual in having hopper windows instead of the more usual sliders.



It doesn't end there either. Although not widely known, Daimler sold some Roadliner chassis in some European markets, including Spain and Portugal, as the Guy Conquest. What a shame that West Riding's examples weren't badged as Guy Conquests.

Finally, going back to Crossley, it later became part of the biggest badge engineering exercise of the lot. After building the four prototype AEC-Park Royal Bridgemasters, plus the structure of the fifth, completed by Harkness for Belfast Corporation, it went on to build the twenty two-car Park Royal Class 103 diesel multiple units for British Railways. But its final act, although not so well known, was the best. In order to save the costs involved in establishing a new company, the dormant Crossley Motors was renamed The Leyland National Company in 1969 and went on to build more than 7500 buses, more than it ever built as Crossley. Perhaps this is how a National should have looked.



Badge engineering was not confined to the UK. As an example, ACTION, the government bus operator in Canberra, Australia, operated 331 Renault PR100 buses, bought from 1985 to 1996. The last was withdrawn in August 2024 at the age of 28. However, following the sinking of the Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" by French commandos in Auckland Harbour, New Zealand, in 1985, it was deemed to be unacceptable for the Australian capital city to be buying French buses, so it simply went ahead anyway and badged them as Macks (by then a Renault subsidiary company). Below Mack PR100-2 970, with large Mack badge, overtakes PR100-3 119 in 2017. Both buses have bike racks on the front. And while Kowloon Motor Bus in Hong Kong had Dennis Dragons, virtually identical buses supplied to China Motor Bus were known as Condors, to keep the customers happy.



A Christmas Quiz Answer

The answer is that Leyland produced 15 different rear-engined models which ran in service. The dates shown are the launch dates. Prototypes may have been in existence for a year or two earlier.

- 1939 Cub REC1 for London Transport
- 1954 Prototype Lowloader double deck
- 1956 Atlantean double deck (PDR and later AN)
- 1960 Lion single deck (export model)
- 1964 Panther
- 1965 Panther Cub
- 1970 National (including National Mk2)
- 1976 B15/TN15 Titan
- 1977 B21 (mainly export)
- 1980 Olympian
- 1984 B52 (export model)
- 1984 Royal Tiger/Royal Tiger Doyen
- 1984 Lynx (including Lynx Mk2)
- 1984 B82 Ranger (export model)
- 1985 Prototype rear-engined Tiger

This total excludes:

- Leyland development prototypes which never ran in service, such as the 1934 rear-engined single decker, B9 (rolling underframe National), C27 (ECW-bodied National) and the B15L/B46 rolling underframe Titan.
- The prototype rear-engined DAB bus and the DAB Travolator, both built when Leyland owned DAB, and other rear-engined chassis, underframes or integral vehicles produced by other manufacturers using Leyland engines, transmissions and running units, such as Brossel, Sisu and UTIC.
- Rear-engined models produced by AEC (Swift/Merlin, Sabre and FRM), Albion (Viking rear-engined), Bristol (RE, VRL, VRT), Daimler (Fleetline, CRC6-36 and Roadliner, plus the 1962 SRD6 show chassis) and Guy (Conquest – a badge-engineered Roadliner) when they were owned by Leyland.

Tailpiece

We tend to think of museums, and bus museums in our particular case, as exhibiting older vehicles which we remember from earlier days. But of course time, technology and operators move on, and collections need to be updated.

A couple of interesting examples from down under demonstrate the point, with an autonomous bus and a Hydrogen fuel cell bus already in museums.

The first is a vehicle which has now been in the Sydney Bus Museum for a couple of years. It is an autonomous (driverless) Navya minibus which was operated by Transport for New South Wales as a trial of the technology from 2017 to 2019. Such is the pace of technological change that it is already obsolete and it finds itself in a museum. As a matter of interest, the buses in the background include Albion Venturer Model 80 1187, believed to be the oldest remaining Albion double decker in the world, and Kowloon 12-metre three-axle MCW Metrobus ML1. And yes you can see an RT and a Routemaster too. The Museum also has numerous AEC, Albion and Leyland half cab 'deckers and single deckers too, plus some Atlanteans and many other British chassis from the 1930s to the 1980s, including Bedfords, Daimlers, Dennis and many other AECs and Leylands.



The second example, from the Bus Museum of Western Australia, is a 2004 Mercedes Benz O530BZ Hydrogen Fuel Cell Citaro, one of three which operated in Perth until 2007. These were the only vehicles out of those in twelve participating cities to operate in the southern hemisphere. Three almost identical buses operated for First London on routes 25 and later RV1. Transperth 32, more usually known by its registration number Ecobus 2, was donated to the BPSWA by Transperth and Mercedes Benz at the end of the trials. However the fuel cells, batteries, motor, hydrogen fuel cylinders and other parts were retained by Mercedes Benz, so the bus is only a static exhibit. Interestingly it has now spent six times as long in preservation as it did in service.



It is seen here on show alongside the Museum's magnificent 1929 Leyland Lion LT1 22, formerly operated by the Metropolitan Bus Company in Perth. The Museum has many other gems, including two Freelines with underfloor Daimler engines, three Dennis Lancets (a Mk III and two Mk IVs), two Fodens, three Guy Arab single deckers, four pre-war Leyland Lions (an LT1, LT5A and two LT9s), the very first Leyland Lynx to enter service anywhere in the world, and a Thornycroft A2, which is nearing the end of a mammoth restoration, including building a complete new charabanc body. There is also a restored Leyland TB5 trolleybus with a locally built body.

Most noteworthy is that there are two British vehicle types which are believed to be the only examples of their kind remaining anywhere in the world. There are three Guy Victoria underfloor-engined coaches with air suspension (independent at the front) and disc brakes (predecessors of the Wulfrunian). The three, dating from 1961 and 1962, are the only survivors of just eleven which were ever bodied (four in Europe and seven in WA). All are semi-derelict, but with enough remaining to restore one complete operable vehicle, which is a project it is hoped to undertake in due course. Rarest of all is a 1967 Leyland Lion PSR1/1 coach (effectively a Worldmaster chassis with an Atlantean power pack), restored and returned to service in 2022. Only 98 were built.

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