

Winter Newsletter 2023/24

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

Welcome to new members:

Trevor Hall



Happy New Year!

We start the 2024 season with a warm greeting and your membership badge is also enclosed. Another year has passed, and further progress continues with the restoration of vehicles within the collection at the Museum. A lot of effort is being expelled on bringing the Green Wulf and the Dalesman coach back to life, along with personal projects owned by museum members. Of note is the County Arab which recently was treated to a start-up of the engine, along with lots of work on the interior fittings and JHL 708, Mike's West Riding Reliance.

Hopefully by the May open day it will be more obvious to see what has progressed, but as with many things, limited resources, means slow progress.

What a cheeky grin!

Who is this we ask? Could it be a new member? (perhaps not, as he looks too young)



It is one of our current members pictured many years ago in the early days of the Museum and stood next to a WROPS bus! But who is he?? Find out at the end of this Newsletter!

Another West Riding Property

Further to our last edition regarding various West Riding property hot spots, look at this one!



Parked up at the old Sandal terminus are a couple of Roe bodied AEC Regents. This building still exists and can be found next to the Castle Public House on Barnsley Road. Do any of our readers remember the terminus, and can they share any stories of how things worked back in the 1950's??

Service vehicle surprises

We have recently discovered this shot of a vehicle that most of us never knew about! It is understood that several of these vehicles were purchased during NBC days, during the fuel crisis of the 1970's, to allow fuel to be moved around Depots should the need arise. Does anyone know more details regarding their use??



Left; Drab Green livery

In addition, we came across this shot of a tow truck during the NBC era that looks to have a very similar Leyland cab on it? This one has NBC red branding, yet the tanker above is in a green livery, but clearly was around in post NBC days given the Metrobus liveried VR in the background!



Can you fill in the blanks? When were these vehicles in use and where were they kept?

R. I. P Leo Pratt

Just as we went to press, the sad news reached us that one of our founding members, Leo Pratt, had sadly passed away.

Leo had been a very active member of WRWPS and the Museum in its early days and was particularly "hands on" when it came to vehicle restorations. He was a founding member of the West Riding Wulfrunian Preservation Society and heavily involved in the restoration of the Green Wulf, Ethel and Dalesman coach and spent many evenings in the West Riding Savile Street depot moving those projects along.

Perhaps he was most fondly thought of as the man that inspected the engineless hulk of "Ethel" at Castleford depot, before WROPS (then the WRWPS) made the decision to acquire the bus.

It is fair to say that Leo was an absolute gentleman and made time for everyone.

A private family funeral is planned in celebration of Leo's life.



To the left we see Leo inspecting Ethel prior to her acquisition by WRWPS.

After many years of membership, he will certainly be missed, and we all send our thoughts and condolences to his family. A full tribute to Leo will be included in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Wulfrunians and trams – Basil has a question?

There were potentially some rare opportunities for Wulfrunians to be photographed alongside first generation British double deck trams, in Leeds, Sheffield and Glasgow. Whether it ever happened is another matter, and no such photos are known to exist.

The known facts are shown below.

The prototype Guy Wulfrunian, West Riding 863, would have been completed at the Charles H Roe Roe factory at the end of October 1959 and would presumably have been road tested in the area on completion. It was launched at the Guy Motors factory in Wolverhampton on 4 November 1959 and was then briefly shown to Birmingham City Transport officials two days later, before moving to Scotland for demonstration at the Scottish Motor Show, which started on 13 November. This meant that in theory there was time for it to have returned to the Roe factory for the rectification of any defects first, although whether it did so is not known.

The Roe factory was only a short distance from the Crossgates terminus of one of Leeds City Transport's final two tram routes, which closed on 7 November 1959. So theoretically there were a few days between the end of October and 3 November, and maybe even on 7 November itself, when 863 could possibly have been seen and perhaps even photographed alongside a Leeds Horsfield or Feltham tram.

Similarly, although a red bus, is it possible that West Riding initially trialled 863 on a number of green routes as well? If so did it ever get to Sheffield on route 67 before 8 October 1960, and if so was it ever photographed alongside a Sheffield tram?

The production West Riding Wulfrunians did not enter service until January 1961, too late for both the Leeds and Sheffield trams.

Finally, there were several opportunities for Wulfrunians to be photographed alongside Glasgow trams, which operated until 4 September 1962. These included:

- West Riding 863 on demonstration at the Scottish Motor Show from 13-21 November 1959. It was photographed making demonstration runs in Glasgow, but no photos including a tram are known to exist.
- Demonstrator 7800 DA, used by Western SMT in May 1960 and Glasgow Corporation in June 1960. It was photographed alongside a Glasgow trolleybus, but not with a tram.
- Demonstrator 8072 DA, used by Western SMT in January 1961, Central SMT in April/May 1961 and Graham, Paisley around the autumn of 1962.

It is of no real consequence to the Wulfrunian story, but it is one of those minor little things that makes the story more interesting. After more than 60 years, this is a real long shot, but if anyone has any knowledge of a photo of a Wulfrunian with a tram in service (not in preservation), I would love to hear from you.

Basil can be contacted on email at; roundwood22@bigpond.com

Editors note.

Basil's comprehensive book on the history of the Wulfrunian is with the publisher and being worked through prior to publication. Having seen a sample of what it will look like and having had the privilege of assisting with some of the content, I can say without hesitation that Wulfrunian fans will not be disappointed. Basil has already committed to ensuring that all monies raised from the publication of the book will be donated to support the ongoing care of WHL 970.

We should never forget that Basil was the man that saved 970 from the yard at Crouch End Luxury Coaches, having her towed back north for restoration to commence. The story of 970, and every Wulfrunian produced, is covered in detail in his book. Once a firm date for publication is known, we will let you all know.

Alexander transfers

Here we have three coaches that have quite a history and it can be argued probably donned West Riding Automobile Company coach style livery for the shortest period ever!!



The coaches seen above have a very interesting history and are also a mix of chassis types, even though they look identical. First up is GHD 416G, then 415G and KJX 2G. These coaches are two Leopards and a Reliance, only identified as being different from each other by their badges.

In 1969, the newly formed National Bus Company which had acquired the former BET interests, re-structured the bus companies in West Yorkshire, creating the West Riding group of companies (Hebble, West Riding and Yorkshire Woollen District) controlled from the West Riding office in Wakefield.

In March 1970, all the services Hebble had taken over from Yorkshire Woollen District reverted to that Company and changes continued in May 1970 when Hebble's Bradford to Bingley; Bingley to Duckworth Lane, and Bradford to Huddersfield services all passed to the West Yorkshire Road Car Company. The coaching interests of Yorkshire Woollen District were then transferred to Hebble Motor Services, together with the Frost Hill, Liversedge garage. On the 1st March 1970 joint working between the municipal authorities was introduced replacing many of the Hebble services. Over the next few months, the remaining Hebble services were gradually dismembered and the famous brand "Hebble" effectively became the coaching arm of the West Riding Group.

GHD 412-416G were new to Yorkshire Woollen, were taken on by West Riding and then transferred to Hebble as the coaching arm of the then NBC area. This may explain their very short lived green and cream coach style livery. KJX 1-3G looked identical with their matching Alexander dual purpose 49 seater bodywork but had AEC Reliance chassis.



Clever use of the paint job on the above shot to the right, gave the impression of beadings on the lower panels, when in fact there were none around the lower red paintwork. These shots were taken in 1971. The result gave the coach a similar livery to its Plaxton Panorama stablemates.

Ken Aveyard has kindly provided the following details:

"Regarding KJX 1-3G they were originally purchased by Hebble as they needed something to operate the White Rose Express from Halifax to Sheffield, the X12 to Manchester and their share of the various coaching pools. In addition to get 49 comfortable seats they went for the 12 metre AEC Reliance, and by specifying folding doors they qualified for bus grant. Unfortunately, by the time they arrived, NBC was already unwinding Hebble's stage carriage services into the Halifax Joint Omnibus Committee.

The Reliances were not well liked on bus work as they apparently handled badly with poor brakes compared to the shorter examples in the fleet and they were building up an excess of non-stage mileage which had to be less than 50% at three years old otherwise the bus grant had to be repaid. Once Hebble had been absorbed by YWD and subsequently West Riding, they were moved to Castleford depot where they were supposed to work service 140 to Goole, where their 49 coach seats were an improvement on normal service bus seats. I didn't have any involvement with them, but as AEC Reliances were pretty much a minority, they drifted in to decline and were disposed of in 1975.

The GHD-G Leopards were purchased by Yorkshire Woollen for the same work, namely White Rose Express and various coaching pools where they supplemented the EHD-F Leopards. They too were purchased with bus grant whereas the EHD-F were not. (That didn't stop me having to conduct an EHD-F on a 38 when we were short of buses but that's a different story!)

They also worked weekend express services to the likes of Blackpool in the summer. In 1971 as part of the merging of YWD and West Riding, service X12 and the X32 X33 White Rose Express were licensed to West Riding and the GHD-G's were repainted in green and cream and shared between Heckmondwike and Belle Isle. I used to have to check on their mileage each week to make sure they were doing more stage mileage Monday to Friday than they were non-stage on a weekend. They went through various liveries from cream and red, to cream and green, then in April 1973 267 went into all over green, poppy red and white followed then finally all-over poppy red paintwork."

As Ken states they made their way back to West Riding as seen below. To the left we see. 267 freshly outshopped in all over green in April 1973 just before NBC poppy red was rolled out. This was probably one of the last traditional West Riding "Green" repaints. Also shown below are various intermediate livery styles carried on various batch members. The final insult was perhaps bus livery with one white stripe and the totally drab all over poppy red.

So which livery looks best? Green or red, you decide!



School Bus luxury - and one that started a lifelong interest

Looking rather befitting of its "luxury travel" signage under its rear window, is this Plaxton bodied Bedford Val that provided school bus duties around Wakefield in the early 1970's. Owned by Charlie Bartle, it plied for trade on an evening, ferrying customers to Charlie's Empire Bingo Hall on Leeds Road in Outwood, whilst during the day it was employed on school duties and private hires.



9802 UK - New to Don Everall, before seeing out its days in Yorkshire

Charlie had a reputation for using obsolete past their best rolling stock, so this one stood out from the crowd, looking a little more cared for than the rest of the fleet, and perhaps being a credit to its former owner, Alver coaches of Alverthorpe, Wakefield. School buses are often the starting point for our interest in buses, and in this case, this one certainly is responsible for starting one of our members lifelong hobbies. If you have a shot of a bus or coach that got your interest going – let us have it for publication and tell your story!

There's life beyond West Riding

Looking rather resplendent in their new owner's livery styles are WHL 276J and WHL 283J



First up is the one that travelled only a few miles south to Sheffield, in the striking livery of Andrews. Meanwhile on the right we see a more restrained rural operators colours in the form of Kimes of Folkingham. This batch of Alexander bodied Fleetlines certainly found favour as good solid second-hand buses, unlike their later NCME bodied counterparts. It isn't for us to judge, but perhaps the Alexander bodied versions were more strongly constructed, which probably explains why another one from the batch, WHL 275J, still sits next to a windmill in Holland as shown below.



Finally, these 2 saw out their days in Wales

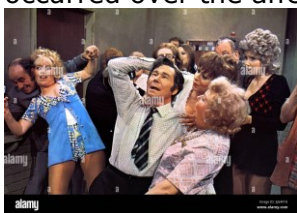


From the Archive



The B&S social staff club was based alongside the Depot in Featherstone, and after the sale of B&S to West Riding, the social club was gifted to the employees and members. The Club traded for many years and as we can see on this advert was proud of its heritage, with the top left-hand corner proclaiming the history of how it was formed, mentioning both West Riding and B&S Motor Services.

After many years of decline, it closed, and the site was sold to construct a Kwik-Save supermarket on the site just off Station Lane. Nothing lasts forever and indeed the Kwik-Save also faced demolition several years later to make way for a housing development. "Turns" were clearly still being booked to draw in the punters, even towards the end, and we wonder how many times "Bingo" was shouted over the years in the old Club building. Thoughts also turn to how realistic the Club Canteen "works do" scenes were in the "On the buses" films and indeed how many punch ups occurred over the affections of the Clippies back in the day in this very B&S club?



Left; Stan in a canteen punch up over the affections of a Clippie (Pat Ashton in suitable 1970's style blue mini-dress!) Pat featured in both the films and the TV series and acquired a variety of character names including Nymphy Nora – in today's politically correct world, would that be allowed?

2024 Open day plans

Thanks to Julie for pulling this year's events together and here are the confirmed dates for your diary;

Sunday 19th May Spring Event at the Museum

Sunday 7th July at The Mill Outlet Batley (this is a community-based event)

Sunday 22nd September Autumn end of season event at the Museum

Plans are coming together, and **YOUR HELP** is needed to keep our events going. It has probably not gone unnoticed that another local bus Museum has not run any events for a couple of years now and could this be that there aren't enough people willing to help run their events? If you would like to get involved for the first-time contact Julie our Events Organiser and Secretary on 07983 095551.

Ribble rendezvous!

We recently received a request from the Ribble Society to assist in the restoration of their PD2. As is often the case, the PD2 in question had been taken to pieces some years ago by one team, and now many years later, another group of individuals is trying to resurrect it, with no former knowledge of where things fit and how they should look!!

We have extended a warm invitation to the Ribble group, and PD2 Custodian, Richard Hall, will do the honours at a date to be arranged.



Our result of years of hard work - they're aiming for something similar!!

Out and about

In the coming months the rally season will start up again and, in the meantime, we have received an invitation to a Commercial Vehicle Rally from the famous "Motorist" venue at Sherburn in Elmet. The event takes place on Saturday the 30th March and we are hoping to give a few buses a run out to this venue that boasts food and plenty of space to display vintage vehicles. If you've not heard about it, look at their website for more information. If we decide to go, then more details nearer the time regarding departure times will be posted on our Facebook page and Museum website.

The general Rally calendar is filling up as usual and it would be nice to have more members travelling with us to external events, after all it is one of the benefits of paying your subs!!

Coronation conundrum concluded

Thanks to Rev Peter Calvert for the following follow up.

I have a copy of the PSV Circle/Omnibus Society's West Riding publication, which, assuming it's accurate, seems to answer the question about the 1953 PD2s. It says that 739-742 were delivered in Coronation livery, in service June 1953, and 743-4 delivered red in error, in service July 1953, repainted green in 1954.

745-50 delivered in green, October 1953. This would seem to match my own recollections; I'm sure the red ones were never intended for "red routes", and that somebody did indeed use the Yorkshire Traction livery by mistake. As I wrote somewhere else, on the occasions I saw them they were always in Wakefield bus station on the Bradford stand. Any suggestion that the 745-50 batch were in Coronation livery is shown to be a non-starter, given the delivery date of October.

I hope that this helps! Peter.

Vehicle Updates

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

KHL 855

The radiator repair A full strip down and proper overhaul was required as can be seen in the shots below. Visitors to the Museum will often see a vehicle out of action for long periods and wonder why? Here is an example of how a simple water problem leads to a big expense and weeks of work for a specialist company who must locate or repair obsolete parts and fittings.



Del, at Huddersfield Radiators, took on the challenge to get the Radiator back to as new condition. Over 100 man hours were spent to bring it back to as new condition and it is now back on the Arab thanks to Steve Hurley.

The cheeky chappie revealed

Who is that young West Riding fan revealed on the first page? It is none other than Andy Hartley, one of our Trustees!!



A recent shot of Andy grafting at the Mill Outlet event

Andy has lots of memories of grand days out with his dad and the wider WROPS team members in the very early days of the Society and Museum. Long road runs were the order of the day and Andy fondly remembers the many Café stops en-route to various events, with the green Wulf and Ethel B often in convoy.

The Long Shadow appearance

Further to our revelation last year that LHL 164F was to appear in an ITV drama, here are a couple of shots that show her in action on a Leeds housing estate.



She appeared within the first few minutes of episode one and the sound effects were amazing. The actual TV programme was not an easy watch as it tells the horrendous story of the Yorkshire Ripper and his reign of terror during the 70's and early 80's. The story begins with two of the McCann children waiting for their mum at the bus stop, only to discover that she has become the first victim when she does not alight from the bus.

More blunderbuses

AEC fans take cover as we tell the sorry tale of this small batch of West Riding Swifts. Delivered in 1967, JHL 819- 824E were 49-seater dual purpose Marshall bodied buses probably intended for longer routes. The original West Riding livery sat quite well on them, but that is probably the only compliment likely to be handed out. Several were based at Selby for use on the longer routes and they were also used on the Wakefield – Cullingworth route, which is quite surprising given what turned out to be problematic operation of the batch.



A Swift on a 3 to Woolley

and a Roadliner

Perhaps most interesting is that when it came to considering what vehicles should be used on the White Rose Express motorway services, a decision was taken to place in service some brand new Plaxton Derwent bodied Leopards, rather than rely on the Swifts, which in fairness should have probably been allocated the job with their coach style seats. Instead, the Swifts were relegated to mundane local services such as the Agbrigg – Broadway, probably because when they failed in service, which they regularly did, they didn't have far to tow them back to Belle Isle! A standard joke at the time was that a Swift would always be sat over the pits and often for weeks on end, usually because of a lack of spare parts.

Meanwhile, the disastrous acquisition of Daimler Roadliners, FHL 819-828D, in 1966 meant that for many years West Riding must have been scratching their heads trying to work out how they would cover the running boards on a daily basis. The Roadliners were extremely noisy machines with a strange rear saloon seating layout but were quite handsome machines with their 50-seater Plaxton Derwent body styling and huge Daimler badge adorning the front panel.

Museum member Nigel Blair owned a Swift in preservation (but not a West Riding one) and has the following to say about them:

"My encounter with the AEC Swift was with a 1973 Eastern Coach Works (ECW) example that had operated in Great Yarmouth for its whole life, WEX 685M Great Yarmouth No. 85. It was bought on a tender bidding system way back in the late 1990's. With its ECW body it looked much like a Bristol RE without the front mounted radiator. Condition wise it had fallen on hard times with many parts missing and as with many an old service bus living long into its service life, a bit of bodging had been going on to keep it serviceable for that extra year or two.

Operationally it was straight forward. Leaf springs, robust self-changing semi auto gearbox and the AEC 505 engine in the back which never seemed to lack power. In a hilly environment like Sheffield, it might have been different. The ECW body on WEX 685M was still solid and didn't need any major structural work doing to it. A well corroded centre step about the worst. Other bodybuilders operating in a more hostile environment may well have fared differently of course. Anyway, no fancy Electronics, even the speedo was cable driven. Grease the greasy bits and keep on top of the things that wear out. After restoration the foot brake valve was about the only main problem, with the bus disgracing itself at the Meadowhall Rally, being towed away behind a tow truck. A new one was promptly fitted and that was it – no more major problems.

Many miles later it's still going strong in the hands of The Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group. <https://easterncountiesbusgroup.co.uk/>

As for Roadliner operation in preservation, we don't know anyone locally who took that challenge on. (but there are some Black & White Motorway Roadliners around somewhere!) More information on Nigel's Swift, and the West Riding batch, will be in our next edition!!

Where it all began..... the final bit

Thanks to Kev Malpas for reminding us of where it all began on the 17th November 1971.



Seen above is the former West Riding Tramways Club on Market Street, Wakefield. At this location a meeting took place to "save a Wulf" and from that humble beginning and the formation of the West Riding Wulfrunian Preservation Society, we now see today a registered Charity WROMT and the original society WROPS (formerly WRWPS) still doing what it set out to do.

For those who remember Wakefield like this, at the bottom of the street opposite the road end, is the old Granda Bingo modern flat roofed building seen in the photograph, that became the Gala Bingo and that originally started life in 1963 as The Fairlanes Bowling Alley. It opened on the 6th July and no doubt attracted huge numbers through its doors, many of whom would have travelled by West Riding, Yorkshire Woollen & County Motors to enjoy their trip out to the new bowling alley.



Even back in the 60's building delays were evident – the planned opening was April, but it didn't open until July. To finish off this edition here are a selection of buses that could have ferried visitors to that very opening..... and are still with us today, even though the bowling alley is long gone!



PS, and before anyone points it out, we know that the Wulfrunian livery shown above, was not implemented until well after 1963 and that UCX 275 was probably still in the workshop being repainted and having its destination aperture layout changed following its transfer from County in May of that year!!