

Spring 2024

If you have any news or views for publication please contact, hand or send them to Julie Aylward, Secretary or direct to Basil Hancock email roundwood.22@bigpond.com

Welcome to new members:

John McCarthy



More on Hebble

Following the reference to Hebble coaches in our last edition, this prompted comments from some members on their recollections of when Hebble coaches graced Belle Isle depot.



Seen above in the first two shots, the Hebble Leopard coaches were very well presented. These two specimens were often parked on the ramp at Belle Isle depot awaiting their next duties and stood out due to their cream and red paintwork. It may have seemed like a backwards step when more elderly Leyland Leopards replaced newer Bedford Vam and Val models at Belle Isle Depot! The third shot shows one of the former West Riding Bedford MHL-F Vam's, which appears to have tables inside, and would have been used as a team coach for Wakefield Trinity and Featherstone Rovers, MHL 230/1F having been re-seated from C45F to C41F, for these duties.

Photograph appeal - M-TRAVEL - A105 WVP

We are currently seeking our members help with an appeal for the following.

Do any readers have a collection of "M Travel" photographs? M Travel plied for trade around Castleford and Pontefract before disappearing a few years ago.

If anyone has any suitable photos of their fleet that they would be prepared to look through, and could supply a shot of **A105 WVP**, please contact Basil Hancock at roundwood.22@bigpond.com

R.I.P Ian "Jock" Hunter

We are sad to report the passing of another long-standing member of the Museum, Ian Hunter, known to most of us as Jock.

Jock was known to many and was around from the early days of WROPS. We cannot do him justice in such a small space in this Newsletter, and a more detailed tribute to him will be included in a future edition. In the meantime, we send our condolences to his family and close friends.

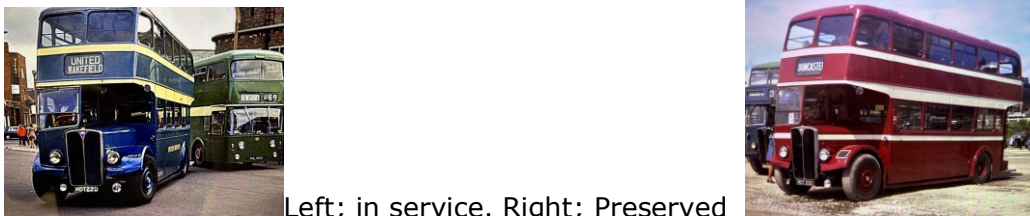
Fortunately, two of our Trustee team had visited Jock at home in his final few days.

Coopers Collection

In a previous issue of the Newsletter, we gave some focus to WR & P Bingley of Kinsley, one of the operators on the "United Services" routes out of Wakefield. Bingley's were by far the biggest of the several operators that made up the combine, not least because of their large fleet of touring coaches operated alongside their service buses. But what of the other operators that succumbed over the years? The final two "United" operators on the Wakefield to Doncaster route were WR & P Bingley and Cooper Brothers of South Kirkby. During Coopers final years of service, they relied on just three vehicles to cover their share of the joint service mileage, as shown below:



Two Bedford's and a Leyland seem rather a strange combination! The two Bedfords were bought new, and the Panther Cub came from Manchester, and all followed a selection of elderly double deck half cabs, an example of which is shown below;

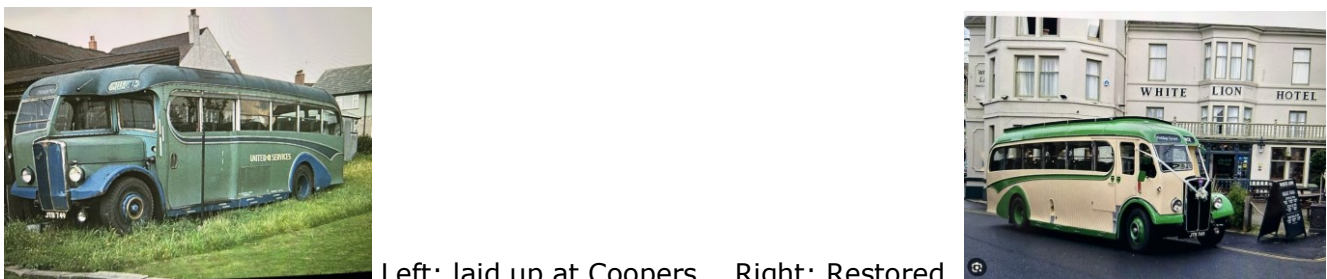


Left; in service. Right; Preserved

MDT 220 was one of Coopers deckers bought from Doncaster Corporation and after retirement it made it into preservation – but not for long. It lasted long enough to be repainted into its original Doncaster livery, but does anyone know why it fell on hard times and disappeared?

A gradual move away from older vehicles meant that more modern single deck buses carried almost as many passengers as their predecessors. Despite the two Bedfords shown above looking quite short, both had three plus two seating towards the rear, with a very small gangway, to up their seating capacity to something like a much longer 36ft Plaxton Derwent bodied Leopard that WR & P Bingley operated. The owners of Cooper Bros drove their own buses, which must have been quite unusual in the 1970's. Alongside them was a trusty band of Conductresses, who had a reputation for a no-nonsense approach from anyone who crossed them. That said, no matter how full the bus was, they never left a passenger behind!! Coopers eventually sold out to WR & P Bingley, who in turn sold the whole business to West Yorkshire PTE a few weeks later.

It is thought only one former "United Services" vehicle survives in preservation and that is a Cooper Brothers coach, JTB 749, an AEC Regal operated on the Wakefield to Doncaster service. Unless, of course, you know different?



Left; laid up at Coopers. Right; Restored.

The restored JTB 749 now carries Florence Motors livery and until recently operated for Cumbria Classic Coaches.

R.I.P Leo

In our last edition we sadly announced the passing of Leo Pratt, one of the founding members of what was WRWPS, that eventually widened into what later became the Museum.

Our condolences were sent to his family and a private funeral took place.

Leo was in it from the start. The minutes of the first ever Meeting of the WRWPS (now WROPS) on the 17th November 1971 clearly show that he was there, offering help to preserve a Wulf.

He was an active "restorer" and would often talk about the early days of WROPS, when restoration plans for each vehicle were approached methodically, with specific tasks allocated to each person within the Society, to ensure a swift completion of the vehicle in hand. One example was the Dalesman coach, where Leo was charged with rebuilding the sliding entry door and finding or replicating the missing front and rear bumpers, As can be seen today, he did a splendid job!!! After the acquisition of UCX 275 (995) and his involvement in bringing it back to top notch condition, he was as proud as punch on the day he took it for its first M.O.T as a restored preserved bus. It obviously passed with flying colours! Whilst doing all this, Leo also restored two Trojan vans.

He was no stranger to manning the WROPS stall in the early days, as can be seen in the shot below, stood alongside another founding member, a very young Ken Aveyard.



Leo in the middle, with his signature flat cap, and Ethel B behind him

He was involved in the construction of the new building at Ravensthorpe and got stuck in with a shovel – he was never afraid of hard work.

In later years Leo kept a low profile but was over the moon to see West Riding buses he thought would never see the light of day again, back on the road. He was chuffed to bits to ride on KHL 855 on one of its first outings and could not believe it had been resurrected after 40 years slumbering in various sheds. Similarly, the red Wulfrunian was a sight to behold in Leo's eyes, as he and others had initially intended that both a green one, and a red one, should be preserved. Fortunately, Leo got to see that dream come true before his sad passing and we are sure his memory will live on in all those who knew him and the buses he helped restore.

He was an avid bus rider and told stories of the last days of the Wulfs, riding as many as he could, much to the bemusement of the Conductors who could not understand why he had travelled to the end of a long route, only to return the other way on the same bus!! In later years he took a more passive role at the Museum but loved to attend events. He would join us on trips out, most recently to the Metrocentre Rally and could be seen joining the Castleford feeder to our regular Open Days.

Leo had an extensive personal collection of bus and truck memorabilia. One of his key interests was the collection of manufacturers emblems and he spent many days searching scrap yards and bus depots in search of treasure. His extensive collection of such things was on loan to the museum for many years and was displayed on the walls – many of you will probably remember these display boards in the early years. He eventually took them home for safe keeping and displayed them in his garage and workshop and he was always willing to invite friends around for a one-to-one viewing of his amazing collection.

He was a kind, polite and well-informed chap with a word for everyone. So, whether you personally knew Leo or not, raise a glass to his memory in the knowledge that his hard work helped to secure the future of the Museum and the Society.

More on the Swifts

Thanks to Nigel Blair for this article

The AEC Swift

A make and model of bus born in the 1960's and made up to the early 1970's when the Leyland National and imports took over the strain. Other single deck models made around the same time were the Leyland Panther, Leyland Leopard, Bristol RE and Daimler Roadliner. Brief interlopers were the Daimler Fleetline single decker, and at an insignificant 17, and the Atlantean single decker.

The chassis frame on the Swift was the same as the Leland Panther service bus. Low, by 1960's standards at the front, and cranked up at the rear over the engine. Leyland offered a coach / semi coach version of the Panther chassis, which was high and flat throughout its length, essentially being a rear-engined Leopard. AEC didn't offer any similar chassis variation save a one off, that being the AEC Sabre.

The AEC Swift came with two engine options and two lengths. The 505 and the 690, 33ft and 36ft, a third engine option was available for Australia that being AEC 760. London Transport famously called their Swifts, Merlins. Their longer versions, 36ft, having the 690 engine and their short versions, 33ft, the 505 engine. London Transport being the largest operator of Swifts took an operational dislike to them and they had quite a short life there. Many moving on to other operators at home and abroad or the cutters torch at places like Wombwell Diesels, literally a stone's throw away from T Burrows Depot. Other operators seemed to cope better with Swifts with them seen between Scotland and Southampton, Great Yarmouth to Cardiff.

As with the bus industry in the 1960's -70's the chassis could and would be bodied by a variety of body builders. Alexander, East Lancs, Pennine (Seddon), Roe, Northern Counties, Metro Cammell, Park Royal, Strachans, Willowbrook, Marshall and Eastern Coach Works. I am trying to think which I have missed out, as there was so much variety out there.

West Riding purchased 6 AEC Swifts with Marshall bodywork. Fitted with what I can only loosely term semi-high back seats, designated DP47F, so that they could if needed do coastal/private hire duties. I've no idea if any achieved any coastal or private hire duties or indeed Expressway duties. Normal bus seats were later fitted at some point, I suspect converted as a trial in comparison with the Leyland Panther - the Panther winning!! The Panther then subsequently losing out to the Bristol RE when that model became available to the company. Ultimately the Bristol RE losing out to the Leyland National when that model was thrust upon them by the National Bus Company. The West Riding Swifts only lasted ten years until 1977, a mediocre life, not surprising by that time being 6 odd balls out of well over a 100 strong single deck fleet. Carrying spares for the 6 of them was probably prohibitive when Leyland 680 and Gardner engined buses were throughout the fleet, then add in the influx of new Leyland Nationals as well, and it's easy to understand why they were withdrawn. I don't recall them going elsewhere for further service.

Delivered in a fetching half and half livery, this gave way to the all-over green scheme as below



Closer inspection of JHL 824E on the right reveals that the dual-purpose seating has been removed and standard bus seats, taken out of scrapped Wulfrunians, have been installed. Does anyone know if these replacement seats were green or red?? Note that this bus also carries the White Rose West Riding fleet name in the centre of the bus, which is unusual.



Remarkably, the batch did last long enough to have NBC Poppy Red livery applied, but all were withdrawn in 1976, being disposed of a year later. On the left is JHL 822E about to do a 424 to Morley, so the engineers must have been confident!! On the left is JHL 824E again, this time carrying her final livery. Interestingly, both carry different front-end branding as can be seen, clearly the paint shop had a free hand to ignore NBC Corporate layout instructions, or one was done on a Friday afternoon!!

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, 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.



Attached are some pictures I took of it before, during and after my restoration.

In the shots above: Before restoration began. Rear brakes, springs and exhaust silencer replaced - Centre step rebuild.



In the shots above: rear side engine flaps.

The rear side engine flaps were home-made aluminium panels made by Great Yarmouth Transport. So, two used ones were obtained from the Eastern Transport Collection at Attleborough. The internal wood framing was well rotten. Michael Bennett with his expertise in such things rebuilt them but as such is unseen, so a big Thank you there.

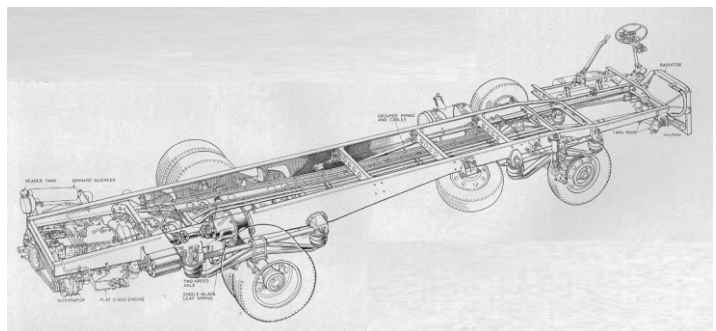
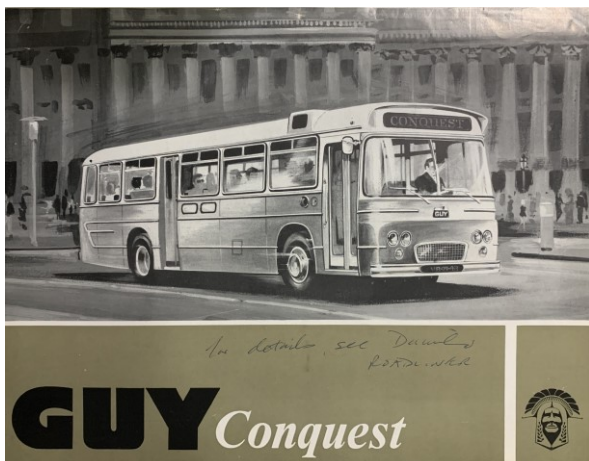
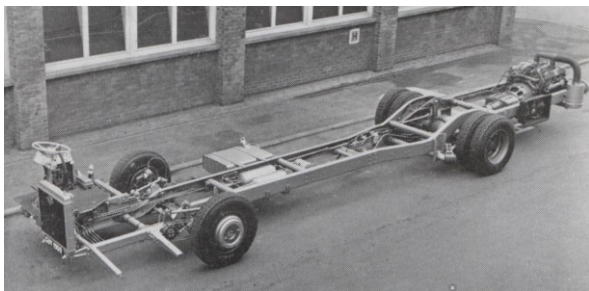
First trip out in restored condition was the AEC Rally at Newark 2004. 20 years ago, this May. A credit to Tony White's painting, again. I've not seen the bus recently, but it still looks good in the pictures.

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. 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 main problem. Disgracing itself at the Meadowhall Rally being towed away behind a tow truck. A new one promptly fitted.

Many miles later it's still going strong in the hands of The Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group. <https://easterncountiesbusgroup.co.uk/> My personal favourites after the Great Yarmouth ECW Swifts – the Alexander 'W' type Swifts (and Panthers and Fleetlines) operated by a number of operators.

Basil Hancock adds, it was mentioned in the last Newsletter that it was not known for sure whether anyone has an operational Roadliner in preservation. Transport Museum Wythall certainly does. They have Wolverhampton Corporation Strachans-bodied Roadliner 719 restored and operational. There are many photos of it on the internet if you want a look. They also have Walsall 56, fully restored and operational. This is the unique 1968 36-foot Daimler double-decker with front and rear doors, two staircases and the in-line engine under the rear staircase, all nearly 50 years before the new Routemaster appeared. As it has the same Cummins engine as the Roadliner, I would imagine that the sound effects are much the same.

In addition, there is a Guy connection with the Roadliner. Guy was a better-known name than Daimler in some overseas markets. By the time of the Roadliner, Guy had been taken over by Jaguar, Daimler's parent, and so the Roadliner was marketed in some countries as the Guy Conquest. Maybe they would have had some success in selling more to West Riding if they had called it a Guy! In the first picture below, you can see the front-mounted radiator, complete with old-style Guy badge and the "GUY 1969" registration plate. This example had the AEC V8 engine instead of the usual Cummins or Perkins engine. Also seen below is the cover of a late 1960s Dutch language Guy brochure showing the Conquest. Note that someone has written "for details see Daimler Roadliner" on it. The sketch is based on the Willowbrook-bodied Roadliners exported to Edmonton in Canada. At least one Conquest received a double deck body for operation in Spain. It is pictured on page 93 in the July 2022 Buses magazine.



The Roadliner was voted as the worst bus of all time in a Classic Bus poll in 1993, beating the Wulfrunian into second place. Sadly, both West Riding and Wolverhampton Corporation had the unenviable distinction of operating both models.

Lastly, the Panther and Swift were one of the first results of Leyland's takeover of AEC. They shared a common low floor frame and many parts, including axles and suspension, although obviously the engine, radiator location, and steering were different. There were also high floor versions of each for coach use, although few were built. It is more difficult to tell, but I think that the coach chassis frames were largely similar, and the two main chassis longitudinal almost certainly were. So, unlike the Leopards and Reliances mentioned in the same newsletter, West Riding's Swifts and Panthers had more in common than first appeared, particularly when fitted with almost identical Marshall bodies.

Just to confuse things further, the 126 Panthers built for Perth, Western Australia, between 1969 and 1974, had AEC-style rear offside radiators, so were even more like a Swift, although an earlier prototype had the usual front radiator. These 126 included the very last Panthers built. In the shot below I took in November 1987 they clearly show the rear radiator grilles.



A Perth Panther, looking very National like at the front.

Front-end forensic examination

With reference to the two Guy Arab IV in the Autumn newsletter, I think that the wider waistband across the windscreen on the GHL is due to the lowest level on the nearside canopy on the KHL being extended across the front, including the windscreen, and down the side above the side window to the driver's door.

More interestingly, assuming that the Guy front end is the same on both buses (which it may not be), the cream waistband on the GHL would, if it extended around the front, meet the front panel at a higher level than on the KHL, suggesting that the lower edge of the lower deck windows was lower on the KHL. This is also visible when comparing the height of the cream band relative to the lower edge of the driver's door and the top of the front wheel mudguard, and also when comparing the gap between the cream band and the bottom offside corner of the windscreen, which is clearly greater on the KHL than on the GHL. However just to confuse things further, the front mudguard on the KHL looks to have a different profile above the wheel, seeming to slope up towards the body, whereas on the GHL it is more horizontal.

I cannot seriously believe that Roe changed the lower edge height of the lower deck windows, but you never know.



Regards Basil

Out and about and dates for your diary!

Get your diary out for the following details:

Open Day Sunday 19th May 24 at the Museum -**CANCELLED**

Monthly Members Meeting Monday 20th May 24 715pm – REMINDER at our new venue the Ravenswharfe Hotel Huddersfield Road Dewsbury WF13 3EH

Monthly Members Meeting June – please check our website nearer the time!

Various trips out to the rally scene are also planned and details are published on the Museum website and Museum facebook page

Derwent Delights

When you think of Plaxton what comes to mind? We think 99 percent of people would say "Coaches", but Plaxton did produce bus bodies and in the 1960's they launched this version of the Derwent body style. There were several incarnations of the Derwent, and seen below is the all-metal version that West Riding loaned for use at the 1962 Commercial Motor Show.

West Riding took WHL 985-987 in 1962 and the remainder of the batch WHL 988-991 in 1963. Many of these saloons were based at Castleford, and it is fair to say that they were not the most handsome of vehicles. Indeed, they looked quite odd with their extra front headlight in a central air intake cover position. Castleford Depot seemed to like additional headlights, and we can only assume that this was due to the country lane route running that demanded better lighting, particularly in the winter months.

The Derwents had something in common with the Ethel buses, despite them not being Roe bodied, in that the rear end full single rear window looked very Ethel like!



This version of the Derwent was not that popular with very few built, the majority on Leyland Leopard chassis, but there were a couple of exceptions. West Riding was the largest user of the type, and they lasted in service to receive the NBC poppy red livery, also being dispersed around most of the various depots throughout their careers, being finally withdrawn and sent to North's dealers at Sherburn in late 1977. It is thought that none of the batch saw further use.

As seen above, the original livery perhaps suited the body style better than the later Tilling livery, which some would argue makes the front windscreen look very small in depth, without the cream band underneath. Those of us who remember them in service think they somehow looked huge, with their 36ft bodywork and 53 seats, but perhaps they were huge compared to what went before them!! Interestingly, WHL 985 that had the honour of being chosen for the display on the Plaxton stand, was originally seated with 54 seats, not 53, for some reason?

One thing is for sure, they were reliable workhorses, despite them being ugly ducklings.

May Open Day - CANCELLED

The next open day has had to be cancelled.

After reviewing several factors at the April Members Meeting it became clear that the operation of the open day was not viable. We have suffered in the last twelve months from a reducing number of "active" members who are prepared to give up a few days a year to help run events. This means that simply manning the entry points, covering Conductor duties, and manning the current Café, Tombola and our stall offering is not possible. Several vehicles positioned in the Museum, are for various reasons, unable to move under their own power, and with reduced numbers of active volunteers, we cannot create the usual space inside the building to accommodate stalls.

Additionally, after checking the rally calendar last year and selecting dates that did not clash with other Events, several other events within striking distance now clash with our date. It is regrettable that this decision was reached, but unless more people get involved, we cannot expect the same small number of people to carry the burden of running successful events. This is of course no reflection on our Events Organiser who is doing her best to make things work, but without more practical support Events cannot happen. The remaining dates for 2024 are under review so if you would like to offer help and keep the doors open, contact Julie.

R.I.P Andrew Pickles

The sad news reached us in early February that Andrew had suddenly passed away. Andrew was a very quiet chap who supported the Museum in various ways. He was a great supporter of our sales stalls, with regular donations of models and clothing to assist in raising funds. He had a passion for Eddie Stobart Trucks, as well as buses, and simply went about his duties on Open Days in an efficient and pleasant manner. There was certainly nothing to dislike about Andrew and for those of us that got to know him over the last five years, his passing was a shock. His final collection of models has been donated to the stall by his family, to whom we send our condolences on the sad loss of Andrew.

Andrew's family were keen to carry out his wishes, and he very kindly left a legacy to the Museum for the acquisition of more premises, which was presented to one of our Trustee team. Andrew was always generous in spirit and his final act of charity was to leave his savings to the Trust. R.I.P Andrew.

It's all at the CO-OP – Wakefield's former department store!



GHL 718 an open platform Guy ArabIV from 1955

We sometimes come across a shot full of period charm and seen above is Westgate in the late 1960's. The Arab is heading for Wakefield Bus Station on a return from Ossett, with its blind incorrectly set as "Ossett via Roundwood". It has just passed Westgate Railway station, the Theatre Royal, then the Lucky 7 Bingo Hall, and is outside the Playhouse/Classic cinema to its right. It is opposite the CO-OP department store, more commonly know as Unity House/Hall. Wakefield Industrial Co-op was eventually acquired by the Barnsley British Co-op who operated the department store during this period. It wasn't quite "Grace Brothers" but wasn't far off, with formally attired staff and restaurant staff in black and white uniforms. We are also told that several of our members met Father Christmas here, many years ago!! It catered for all your needs and just in shot are the Toy, Outfitters and Footwear departments. The building fell on hard times but is now restored to a pristine standard with trendy bars, meeting spaces and the main Unity Hall used for events. Unfortunately, GHL 718 did not meet the same fate and was not saved!

A new Newsletter Editor

After over ten years of compiling and editing the newsletter, Mark Byard had finally passed the baton on to Basil Hancock, who has immense experience in compiling articles for major transport publications. Contact details for any contributions are detailed on the front page of the Newsletter and a big thank you to Basil for taking up the challenge of producing a quarterly update to all our members. Mark took on the job as a temporary measure when it looked like no one else would, and as he said, "temporary for ten years" is hardly temporary!!"

The end bit – of a Wulfrunian from the man (Basil) in the know!

In the Summer 2023 newsletter, you showed the rear of King Alfred AEC Renown 595 LCG and remarked on its similarity to the rear of a Wulfrunian. It was not the only example. The rear entrance AEC Bridgemaster used many standard Park Royal parts, as did the Roe bodies on the Wulfrunians. This can clearly be seen at Burscough in 1982 where West Riding 970 is posed alongside Sheffield AEC Bridgemaster 520. The rear upper deck side windows, the rear emergency window and the rear lights are identical as, I suspect, are the roof dome (apart from the vents) and the main bodyside windows.



Left; then, and right, as is now!



The forward entrance Bridgemaster used a different and squarer style at the rear, as seen on former demonstrator 2211 MK operating with Osborne's of Tollesbury in 1974, and its rear end had nothing in common with the Wulfrunian.



The AEC Renown, having a separate chassis, could (and did) have bodies built by other companies, including East Lancs, MCW/Weymann, Northern Counties and Roe, but the King Alfred example illustrated had a genuine Park Royal body. However, the upper deck emergency window had a single glass, compared with the Wulfrunian's two, the roof dome was slightly different, and the proportions of the three lower deck rear windows were not the same as in the Roe-bodied Wulfrunian. However, I will concede that at first glance it certainly looked similar, as shown by 964 at Savile Street in 1969.



Wakefield versus Winchester



Spot the differences; most obvious are the number plate position and the rear upper deck emergency door split screen on the Wulfrunian.