

# WEST RIDING OMNIBUS



## DEWSBURY BUS MUSEUM WEST RIDING OMNIBUS MUSEUM TRUST

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

No. 101

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## Welcome to the West Riding Omnibus

Welcome to a new-look newsletter and to a new editor.

Mark Byard has decided to hang up his boots after a decade of editing the newsletter, so I would like to start by thanking him sincerely for his hard and consistent work in producing four issues a year. He took on the job on a temporary basis, little expecting that it would occupy him for the next ten years.

It is easy to think that newsletters just happen, but in fact they require a lot of work in sourcing articles and photographs, obtaining up to date news, reviewing events; chasing contributors and passing on all of the other information that the Museum and Trust need to get out to members, not to mention actually typing it all out, printing it and posting it to everyone. At the same time newsletters need to be topical, interesting and eye-catching. This doesn't happen without a lot of effort, mainly behind the scenes, so thank you Mark. Your dedicated work over many years is much appreciated.

We have decided to give the newsletter a name and a logo, and with a nod to both the WROMT and the West Riding Automobile Company (WRAC), it has been named West Riding Omnibus. The logo uses West Riding Automobile Company colours, white rose and lettering, but while it would have been easy to use a photo of the final fleetname used prior to the National Bus Company identity being enforced, making it subtly different reinforces the fact that the Trust and its collection covers far more than just West Riding vehicles, but is nevertheless largely made up of buses and coaches which once operated in the former West Riding of Yorkshire.

At the same time, a numbering system has been started for the newsletter. It is estimated that around one hundred newsletters have been published in the 52+ years since the organisation was formed, some numbered and some not, so to aid future archiving and to eliminate the risk of confusion, the numbering has started at 101.

I am no doubt the editor most distant from the Museum, living some 10,500 miles away from Dewsbury in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, in New South Wales, Australia, so I am not exactly a regular museum visitor. However, the internet makes

communications easy, so other than face-to-face contact, I should hopefully be as accessible as previous editors. And believe it or not, until a few years ago two former West Riding Bristol VRTs occasionally used to pass the end of my road.

Although I will not be known to most of you, apart from perhaps seeing my name in the occasional contribution to the newsletter, my involvement goes back some 52 years, having been an early attendee at a few Saville Street working parties when Wulfrunian 995 was first preserved. I should record here that this first involvement was due to a chance meeting with the late Ian Hunter, whose passing was recorded in the last newsletter. Rest in peace Ian.

Perhaps you won't mind me telling you a little bit about myself. I lived in Leeds from 1971 to 1976, and I have to admit that in my first year at University I did sacrifice more than a few lectures to go into the city and take a ride on a Wulfrunian. It was all a question of priorities of course! I worked for Leyland Bus and its predecessors from 1976 to 1987, as a Design Engineer and was involved with many vehicles with which you may be familiar, such as the National 2, Titan, Olympian, DAB-National artic, Tiger, Royal Tiger Doyen, Lynx (in which I took a lead role), Swift and the various Railbuses and Class 153/155 DMUs, amongst others.

I moved to Australia in 1987 and spent twelve years working in bus manufacturing and operation, latterly as the Fleet Manager of the State Transit Authority of NSW in Sydney, with a fleet of over 1500 vehicles. I then spent two years in a senior transport role for the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics before joining the State Rail Authority for twelve years, mostly as Project Director for New Trains.

I became a Principal Consultant for a well-known transport consultancy in 2014, working on many bus, tram and rail projects - and a monorail too - before retiring at the end of 2021. However, I still work part time as a consultant, currently specialising in bus maintenance audits, zero emission buses and bus rapid transit projects.



*The editor in February 2024 standing in front of Brisbane Metro three-section articulated electric bus, 9004, one of 60 Hess Lightrams being delivered for the Metro busway network, which opens later this year. He spent three years working on the project as the lead vehicle technical engineer. It combines his current interests in zero emission buses and bus rapid transit. The Metro name of the operation replicates that of the former West Yorkshire PTE, but has been chosen to differentiate what will be effectively a rubber tyred light rail service from the usual buses that the City Council also operates, in some cases over the same busways. (Basil Hancock)*

On the heritage side I worked for sixteen years as a volunteer on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway, most of which was as a crossing keeper, steam train guard and diesel railbus driver, continuing my involvement with fifteen years driving and guarding, and as a station master on the Zig Zag Railway in the Blue Mountains. I am currently involved in a technical support role with the Sydney Bus Museum.

As some of you may have noticed, I am Guy Wulfrunian obsessed, having been fortunate enough to ride in and photograph the Wulfrunians when they were still in service. As a bus engineer I have tremendous admiration for what Guy Motors and West Riding tried to achieve. That they didn't succeed was largely due to a lack of money to undertake the significant design, testing and development which was needed and a rushed program to get the vehicles into service too quickly. The fact that most modern buses and coaches have low floors, disc brakes and air suspension, in some cases independent, shows that they were going down the right path, but it was too soon and too underdeveloped.

After an initial involvement with WROPS and 995, I made an attempt to buy Bury Wulfrunian 101 from Berresford, but like many I was rebuffed. I was luckier in my attempt to buy West Riding Wulfrunian 970 from Crouch End Coaches, and after moving it to Burscough in Lancashire, I started work on its restoration. Ironically I was able to buy it from Crouch End because the owner, Eric Rayner, had a soft spot for the bus

and didn't want to sell it to WROPS because he thought they would break it up for parts! As the sole surviving red West Riding bus, that was never going to happen.

Sadly my move to Australia ended my involvement with the bus - they wouldn't let me take it on the plane - but fortunately it has ended up where it should always have been, and I am in awe of the restoration performed on it. Hopefully I will be over in 2025 to see it in the flesh and to have a ride.

As some of you may know, I have written the history of the Wulfrunian, and the 400 pages, 600 images and over 100 drawings are currently with a publisher. It is taking a bit longer to publish than I would have liked, but I will let you know when it is coming out. Any money made from the book will go to the Trust to support the ongoing care and operation of the two Wulfrunians.

I will try to make the newsletter cover more than just Wulfrunians, and I have a number of articles already lined up for future issues, but I will rely on contributions from all of you, so please send them in, whether news, observations, articles or whatever. We might even start a letters section.

This is your newsletter and I would be most grateful for anything of interest that you can submit for publication.

I hope that you enjoy the new look newsletter. If not, please let me know.



## Museum News

The Museum Committee still has a vacancy for a Health and Safety officer. This is a vital role, especially these days, and if any member can volunteer their services it would be much appreciated.

## 2024 Events

As you will be aware from the last newsletter, reluctantly the decision was taken to cancel the planned Spring Event at the Museum on 19 May.

Future dates for your diary include:

- Sunday 7 July. Batley Community Bus Day, 1100-1600 at The Mill Outlet Batley. This is a community-based event and buses will operate between The Mill Outlet and Birstall Market Place every 15 minutes. Volunteers are required as conductors and marshals on the day. Please help.
- Sunday 23 June. Middleton Railway. We have been invited to attend this event and to provide a few short excursions to railway locations in the area. We are not sure which vehicle will attend at this stage.
- Sunday 4 August. Halifax. No information at this stage.
- Saturday 7 September. Heritage Open Days, Dewsbury. The format for this day will be much the same as last year's event.
- Sunday 22 September. Autumn end of season running day at the Museum

**YOUR HELP is needed urgently 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. Could this be that there aren't enough people willing to help run their events? We don't want this to happen to us.**

**If you would like to get involved in any way for the first-time please contact Julie, our Events Organiser and Secretary, on 07983 095551.**

## Out and About

On Saturday 4 May some members took West Riding ECW-bodied Bristol RELL6G 261 to the Gawthorpe Maypole Procession in Ossett. They were made to feel very welcome by the members of the Rotary Club and the Ossett Through the Ages Group who were on board. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day.



## Vehicle Updates

Blackpool Leyland Titan PD2/5	The wiper air cylinders are now back on but not tested. There is a suspected fault in the fuel pick-up pipe.
County Motors Guy Arab II 70	The seats have been re-covered and are now back at the museum.
South Yorkshire Albion Valiant 81	Rear door controls: All the "open" buttons now working but all "close" buttons have to be held in until the doors are fully closed. Work continues. Also, whilst panels are off to facilitate access to door wiring, the opportunity has been taken to renew the wiring for the interior lights and rear lights.
West Riding Leyland National 2 73	Most of the coolant hoses have been replaced, with only a few more to be done.
West Riding Leyland Lynx 377	The air dryer has been removed pending refurbishment.
West Riding Leyland Olympian 577	Fuel system problems. Thought to be caused by a leak in the fuel tank.
West Riding Leyland Tiger PS2 725	The radiator needs to be removed to give access to the leaking water pump.

West Riding Guy Arab IV 855

A full strip down and proper overhaul of the radiator was required. 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, which 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.

**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.**

## People

We are pleased to welcome the following new member: John McCarthy

We are delighted to have you on board and we thank you for your support.

Meanwhile Andy Hartley advises that the Museum's Facebook page has nearly 2400 members.

## Other Notes and News

As mentioned previously, the editor could not bring Wulfrunian 970 out to Australia with him. Probably just as well really. Unfortunately WHL970 was not available, so he has done the next best thing with his car registration.



**For all of the latest news and developments, keep in touch via the Museum's website and Facebook page.**

## Which West Riding Bus is This?

Probably most of you were unaware that any West Riding Lynx ever wore National Bus Company poppy red livery. But one did, albeit briefly.

So which bus is this?

Two clues are firstly that it is now preserved, and secondly that it was photographed outside the Leyland Bus headquarters in Thurston Road, Leyland when new.

As a matter of interest, the building behind the bus contained the drawing office where the Lynx was designed.



No prizes for the answer, but all will be revealed in the next newsletter.

## Early Days on the Buses

*The Roads and Road Transport History Association (RRTHA) was founded in 1992 to promote, encourage and co-ordinate the study of the history of roads, road passenger transport and the carriage of goods. In 2017 it changed its name to the Road Transport History Association (RTHA). Details of the Association can be found on the following link.*

[About RTHA | Roads and Road Transport History Association \(rtha.org.uk\)](http://rtha.org.uk)

*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.*

*The articles were compiled by David Allen (who also wrote the two Venture Publications Super Prestige books on West Riding) and will be serialised over a number of issues. The first instalment is included below.*

*Sincere thanks are expressed to the RTHA.*

### Part 1 - Introduction

William H Baines, was one of the early employees of the B&S Motor Services (J Bullock and Sons) in Wakefield. This Featherstone based company had become one of the largest independent bus companies in the country when taken over by the West Riding Automobile Company in 1950.

Bill, as he was known, recorded his early local experiences and interest in the operation of the first buses through the mining village of Snyderdale, where he first lived. It includes an account of his employment as a conductor and then a mechanic in the six years during which he worked for the bus company.

It is a fascinating account of the days when mobility of the working population, and indeed the growth of bus services was just taking off.

Bill died in 2007, well into his nineties, leaving behind this written legacy of those early working days.

The text is largely as originally published, with minor corrections to spelling and extended captions to photographs. Where additions or changes have been made, including conversions to modern currency, they are included in italics.

### The Bus Comes to Snyderdale

Snyderdale, in the year 1922, was a mining village of fifty domiciles including a school, off-licence and a grocer's shop, and owed its existence to the coal seekers. The school, shops and houses were built in line on the south side of the A645 Wakefield to Pontefract road, parallel to a towering slag heap, running from one end of the village to the other - and still being extended.

The villagers of Snyderdale, living as they did with a coal mine and by-products on their doorstep - thankfully shielded by the slag heap - were fortunate in that, to the south of the village, there remained the unspoilt, panoramic green acres of Nostell Priory and gorse-clad common land.

They were not so fortunate when it came to public transport. Therefore when the West Riding Automobile Company chose to route one of their new bus services through Snyderdale, it offered a welcome alternative to walking the half-mile to Sharlston station for Wakefield or Pontefract. The next nearest railway station was at Featherstone, a mile further east, and located a quarter of a mile off the A645.

The West Riding Automobile Company launched their new passenger operation of buses on Easter Monday 1922 from their tram depots at Wakefield and Castleford.

According to village elders, the West Riding Bristol bus was not the first fare paying vehicle to ply for custom on the Wakefield/Pontefract route, as a vague reference was made to a solid-tyred double-decker (ex-London and a Western Front veteran) opening up a short lived service after World War 1.

What is established fact is that a James Bullock, who lived in Featherstone, ran a Sunday-only service (morning and evening trips) between Wakefield and Pontefract with a charabanc. This service was withdrawn following the opening of the West Riding service.

It was obvious when West Riding took to the road, that a great deal of planning had taken place to ensure the travelling public received a high standard of service. Fare stages appeared to have been planned on a cost effective basis, not in some cases for passenger convenience. Under no circumstances were drivers allowed to pick up or set down passengers between stops.

The bus fleet was kept in immaculate condition, inside and out, with passengers subjected to a noticeable odour of disinfectant; and a sealed box of tools was carried on each bus, to be opened only in case of emergency. Drivers were allowed four minutes engine warm up before leaving the garage for the stand. 'Stand' was the term used for terminal points, or inter-route city or town boarding and alighting points. As there were no bus stations in 1922, these stands were situated in thoroughfares within city or town centres.

Good timekeeping on service was paramount, drivers being issued with a watch, value five shillings, deducted from their first wage and redeemable on leaving the Company.

### How the New Bus Company Ticked

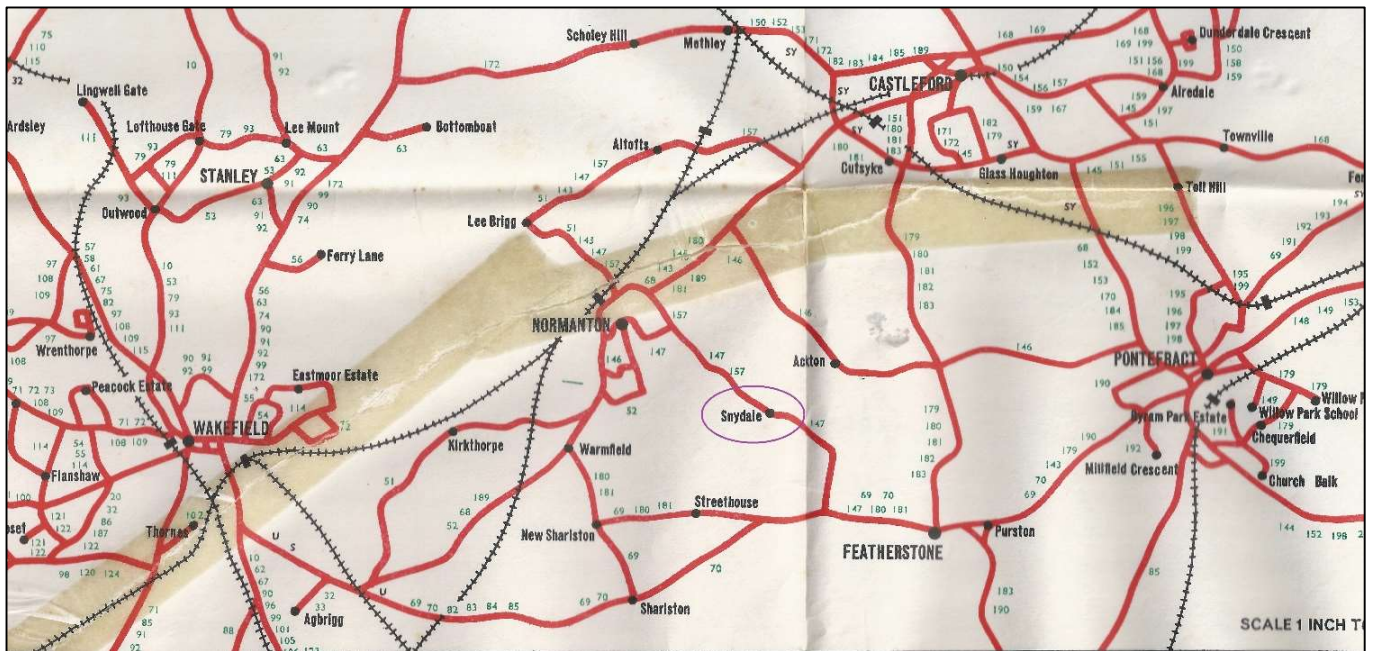
In 1922, there was no legal limit to the number of hours worked by platform staff, and it would appear that rotas were based on morning and afternoon shifts, with a Sunday off following a week of afternoon shifts.

It was possible that split shifts were worked on Saturdays, with an afternoon shift crew being taken off the rota and being assigned to a 'special', later known as a 'duplicate' duty, starting at midday. This left three crews to do the work of four on two buses, i.e. one morning crew worked through until 6.0pm, the other morning crew were relieved at midday by a crew who would work the rest of the shift until the last trip. Meanwhile the midday relief would return to take over from the morning shift at 6.0pm. There were no official meal breaks.

Drivers and conductors were fitted out with a dark blue uniform with piping, hatband and 'choker' double hook and eye collar in mid-green. White cap covers were to be seen in summer.

On joining the Company, drivers and conductors would be put on 'spare', reporting every morning at 4.30am to take over in the event of any rota crew failing to turn up for duty. Transfer to rota duty depended on crew turnover. Payment was by the hour, with extra rates for overtime, the Company providing a continuous service of 365 days throughout the year.





An extract from a 1968 West Riding bus map showing the location of Snyderdale. At that time the village was served by routes 147 (Pontefract-Featherstone-Snyderdale-Normanton-Altofts) once an hour, and 157 (Snyderdale-Normanton-Altofts-Castleford-Airedale) every 30 minutes. Today the 147 still serves Snyderdale (now known as Old Snyderdale) once an hour, now operated by Arriva Yorkshire as a Wakefield-Normanton-Snyderdale-Featherstone-Pontefract service. However its hours of operation are now restricted to daytime only. (Basil Hancock Collection)

The conductor's tools of the trade were a ticket punch and money bag, the bag consisting of two half circles of hard, black leather stitched at the edges to a curved leather band, equally hard and complete with shoulder strap. Feeling for change played havoc with fingernails. These bags were made in Horbury, and one can be seen in Wakefield Museum.

There was a tin box for bundles of tickets, a ticket rack, a tin waybill holder to record rack ticket numbers at designated fare stages and a whistle. On joining the Company, change (or float) to the value of three shillings and sixpence (17.5p) was given.

In the initial stages of the Snyderdale route, it was apparent that the crew were conforming to rules based on a dual purpose - first class service and the establishment of an amicable passenger relationship within the rules. The first drivers were Ted Whitty and Harold Fisher - Harold defecting to the B&S (J Bullock and Sons) some time later.

The code of discipline laid down by the Company was somewhat regimental. Strict adherence to fare stage charges was made essential, as was the standing passenger rule, except when waived by the police. A reprimand, suspension or dismissal could result for a conductor punching the wrong stage number on a ticket or standing or sitting beside the driver on the open platform.

'Twisting' or embezzling, i.e. re-issuing used tickets to passengers, was the ultimate sin in the conductor's rulebook, with a definite point of no return. Smoking on duty was absolutely taboo, and no bus was left standing without a conductor or driver in attendance - and there was always an inspector just around the corner.

To operate the new bus service, West Riding purchased 22 Bristol buses, solid tyre 4-tonners, to seat thirty passengers (according to the PSV Circle fleet history of West Riding, the first nineteen Bristols, 101-119, had Bristol B30D bodies, and the last three, 120-122, had Strachan & Brown B31F bodies). The seats were made of wood laths, varnished in pine with the floor lined with

spaced wooden battens, adding to the comfort in wet weather of both passengers and conductor. As bus design progressed, the battens were replaced by "lino", with no means of drainage, utter misery for conductors doing a non-stop fifteen-hour shift.

The entrance was at the front with no door, fully exposed to the elements on the near side. A tram type cord operated a bell signal, one for stop, two for go, and three for 'full up'.

The mechanics of the Bristols were limited to the essentials, hand brake operating on the rear wheels and foot brake on the transmission. There was no front brake. Clutch operation was somewhat unorthodox, as when travelling downhill, the clutch pedal was depressed.

With leaf springs all round, no shock absorbers and wooden seats, the ride was rather 'hard' when empty. With no press button starters, it was a case of swinging the starting handle, being ready to let go if the engine decided to 'kick back'.

The first bus to pass through Snyderdale had a road lamp positioned centrally above the windscreen. This was eventually replaced by a destination box, illuminated at night. Narrow, black painted destination boards, lettered in white were clipped to each side of the bus. Solid tyres running over setts made it rattle like castanets.

The West Riding livery was green, with white upper and top. Lettering and fleet numbers were in gold, shaded red with wheels in Post Office red.

Snyderdale was on the West Riding Dewsbury-Wakefield-Pontefract-Knottingley route, starting behind the Town Hall in Dewsbury. The Wakefield-Pontefract-Knottingley stand was in Cross Square, outside Timpson's footwear shop. Opposite, and a little further on, was the West Riding waiting room and parcels office.

On the return journey, the Dewsbury stand was outside Mathias Issac Eggleston's drapery emporium, next to the Black Rock public house at the top of Cross Square. Mr Eggleston was a city alderman, and from time to time in summer, voiced his displeasure with regard to bus

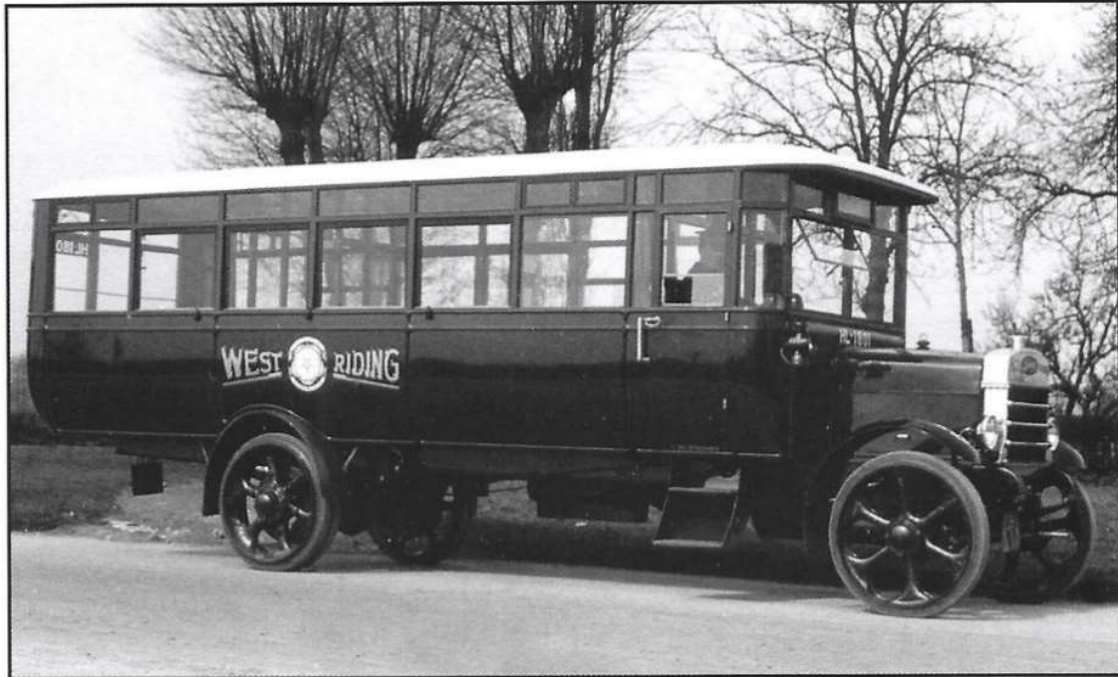
exhaust fumes being wafted through the open door of his haberdashery department!

This new 'green' bus, giving a two hourly service, continued to trundle back and forth through Snydale at the maximum speed of 12mph, adding to the traffic flow of the milkman's horse and float, a shire horse and cart delivering concessionary coal to miners' homes, at four shillings (20p) a ton, and horse drawn farm traffic.

From time to time, a Leyland RAF-type lorry and trailer loaded with wool bales bearing the legend Henry Long and Son, passed through the village on its way to Bradford.

The bus fare from Snydale to Wakefield was eight pence (*just over 3p*) single, with a doorstep pickup for Saturday shopping, although it was standing room only when Featherstone Rovers played Wakefield Trinity at Belle Vue.

Former railway patrons in Streethouse forsook steam, wended their way to the station, walked the length of the platform and took the cross-country path to Old Sharlston to 'catch the bus'. The new experience had an added bonus of being transported right into the city centre of Wakefield.



*Long before Bristol REs and VRTs became part of the West Riding fleet in National Bus Company days, West Riding was an early user of Bristols. In fact, from 1922, when it bought its first bus, to 1925 it bought nothing else and the fleet was 100% Bristol. These comprised 62 4-ton chassis with bodies by Bristol or Strachan & Brown and 50 of the smaller 2-ton chassis, all bodied by Bristol. 140 (HL1801) was one of the 4-tonners of the type described in the text. This bus had a 32-seat forward entrance Bristol body as compared with 31-seat forward entrance Strachan and Brown bodies fitted to some of the fleet and 30-seat dual-door Bristol bodies fitted to the first nineteen examples. 140 was new in April 1924 and, following withdrawal and sale, it became a lorry, working for Calder Vale Garage in Ravensthorpe and operated until at least the end of 1937, possibly for longer. (David Allen Collection).*

In due course the green Bristol bus became part of Snydale's way of life. Ted and Harry (regular drivers) waved to the girls, who no doubt, thought that they were the only girls Ted and Harry waved to. Commuters commuted and miners, homeward bound and still in their 'muck', kept to the back of the bus and smoked thick twist tobacco and Woodbines.

For the village children, there was little intrusion to tops being whipped, hopscotch hopped, shuttlecocks shuttled and boys propelling steel hoops with a fearsome velocity from one end of the village to the other.

## Competition Arrives

About twelve months after the start of the West Riding service, there was an intrusion, when a single deck bus turned the corner at the Featherstone end of the village - not green but liveried in maroon with 'Motor B&S Service' emblazoned in gold on each side. Bus life was never going to be the same again.

The bus that appeared was a front entrance RAF-type Leyland, solid-tyred 30-seater, fleet no. 11, scheduled to run between Wakefield and Pontefract every two

hours. This meant running one hour in front and behind the West Riding service, with the Snydale fare reduced to five pence (*approx. 2p*).

The West Riding company was furious, and immediately ran an extra Bristol to shadow the B&S Leyland, with the result that the straight stretch of road running through Snydale became a daily 'Grand Prix' with the Bristol and Leyland making a race of it from one stop to another. There was no lack of encouragement from the roadside!

Eventually it came to an end, possibly due to intervention on the part of the Wakefield Public Transport Authority or equivalent. Both operators agreed to each running a half hour service, giving the public a quarter hourly service. Tops, hopscotch, shuttlecock and steel hoops had to be timed accordingly.

The B&S fleet no.11, was one of a growing fleet of buses founded by John Bullock, the Featherstone ex-miner who had run the Sunday only charabanc service (*according to the PSV Circle fleet history of West Riding, this bus is likely to have been WR9650, first registered by B&S in 1920 with a 28-seat charabanc body*). The first depot was in Wilson Street Featherstone and a second one was



opened in Saville Street Wakefield. A second garage was built further along Saville Street. It was here that I started work as a conductor in 1928.

The launching of the West Riding Dewsbury to Knottingley service on Easter Monday 1922 meant the end of our train journey from Sharlston Station to Wakefield for Saturday shopping. This suited me, as the lengthwise passenger seat by the front exit door on the Bristol bus, gave me an unobstructed view of the driver at the wheel; my first driving lesson.



*In comparison, 153 (HL1778), in common with the other Bristol 2-tonners, was of forward control layout and had a Bristol forward entrance 20-seat body and a full front. It was new in December 1923 and was withdrawn in 1932 with no further owners recorded. Note the splendid fleet name applied to both of these buses. (David Allen Collection)*

The green Bristol commanded attention. Time keeping was assured, drivers having five shillings (25p) stopped out of their first wage packet to pay for the pocket watch.

With the coming of the bus, I was appointed mother's errand boy at the age of eleven. My shopping missions after tea took me to Wakefield and Featherstone, with strict instructions to travel West Riding.

On one particular warm summer evening I was dispatched to Wakefield to deliver a parcel. My bus was one of the second batch of Bristols acquired by West Riding and had a Strachan & Brown body with front entrance only and pneumatic tyres. I took a seat on the offside, halfway down the aisle, the parcel beside me. There were three other passengers.

Midway between Old Sharlston and Crofton, my parcel started to slide off the seat and landed in the aisle. I reached over the edge of the seat to retrieve it, but it continued to slide under the opposite seat. I found myself sliding in its wake, coming to a halt with my head in close contact with the body panel. I heard voices of concern. Welcome hands eased me out from under the seat. The floor of the bus was at an acute angle. My progress between the seats, towards the exit door was done at a crawl into the arms of the driver. When my parcel started to slide, we were crawling at the statutory 12mph. It was at that speed when the Bristol edged over the grass verge,

As previously mentioned, the driving technique was rather unorthodox, as the clutch was disengaged when travelling downhill.

When the B&S appeared, and following the introduction of an integrated service, father continued to patronise the West Riding.

It must have been the strict uniformity of vehicles and platform staff. Buses were exactly the same, uniforms were matched dark blue, with green piping. Ticket punches were exactly alike, as were the cash bags made in Horbury.

down a grassed embankment, and was brought to a halt by a shrub and tree.

How or why it happened I never knew, the slow speed, and a barmy summer evening - soporific for bored bus drivers. The next West Riding bus took me and my fellow passengers into Wakefield.

My association with B&S buses, both as a fare paying passenger and paid employee, began in April 1925 on leaving school. I was press-ganged by the eldest of my three sisters into taking an appointment with M.I.Eggleston, draper, haberdasher and soft furnishing, Cross Square, Wakefield.

I wanted to be a mechanic and could prove I had the natural ability to be one, but was completely ignored, as my sister 'knew what was best for me'.

Thanks to my employer, I obtained a B&S monthly contract for seven and sixpence (37.5p) with unlimited travel between Snydale and Wakefield. Two years and three months later, when I left, it was the same price. I travelled four journeys a day, going home for lunch, and was to discover that buses came in a variety of shapes and sizes following the purchasing policy of B&S having bodies built by various suppliers.

*To be continued.*



## A Far Flung FLF

Mark Byard discovers a Bristol Lodekka thought to have been scrapped long ago. He also supplied all of the photos.

West Riding accumulated a significant number of second-hand Bristol Lodekka double deckers to replace their ailing Wulfrunian fleet. Perhaps the most notable, and certainly the longest lasting, were the high capacity 70-seater forward entrance FLF's drafted in from the Bristol Omnibus Company. 27 were acquired and these supplemented numerous lower capacity rear-loading 58-seat Bristol LD6G's acquired from the likes of Lincolnshire Road Car, Mansfield & District and Midland General.

Comfortably appointed, the FLF's arrived in waves during 1969/70 and with their Gardner 6LW engines they proved to be extremely reliable. Whether they were popular with drivers is another matter, as returning to drive a manual bus after a semi-auto Wulf must have been a challenge.



Seen above is one of the acquired buses, HHY 184D in Leeds Bus Station in its initial green and cream livery, on a usual 82 to Hemsworth - a very long route and clearly a breeze for a trusty FLF. This bus was transferred to West Riding in April 1970 at a mere four years old and was numbered 453, but here it is carrying its later fleet number, 545,

These Bristol FLF's were the last half cabs in West Riding service (excluding the remaining Guy Arab IV training vehicles) and during their final few months in 1979 were relegated to school specials and reserve pool duties, but often found themselves on full day duties until the end.



During 1971, 453 became number 545, following the integration of the Yorkshire Woollen fleet into a common numbering system. 545 received several repaints in NBC Poppy Red as this colour was known for quick fading in sunlight!

Seen above in its later red NBC corporate livery and ready for retirement is HHY 184D (545), probably in Belle Isle Depot awaiting collection by its new owner. Note that the destination blind has been removed.

The majority of the FLF's went straight for scrap, but HHY 184D was one of several West Riding examples that saw further service. Some of the batch found their way to Lincolnshire and plied their trade around Scunthorpe, while West Yorkshire Road Car were loaned a couple for a short period.

Top Deck Travel, who operated overland tours all over the world and had a great fondness for Lodekkas of all types, took several examples, one of which was HHY 184D. They acquired it in June 1980 and it was spotted working a tour in Amsterdam a few months later.

Later at some stage HHY 184D made its way to the USA and is seen below in San Francisco. The Top Deck livery shown was applied to most of its many Lodekkas for many years, although there were many variants of the layout.



Previous searching of the internet had seen this bus last reported over 15 years ago, so it was assumed that it had met the usual fate of such buses some time afterwards. However, in early 2024 the shot below surfaced, taken in San Bernadino California in 2023!!



Looking fairly complete, it still resembles its former UK self. This is the only shot we have, so we have no idea of its interior fit out or if any bodywork changes have been made to the offside.

With all known examples of West Riding FLF's either scrapped on retirement or sent abroad and presumed scrapped in the intervening years, members David Keel and Nigel Blair decided that the next best thing to restore would be the "one that got away" in the form of EHT 108C. West Riding had operated EHT 106/107C, but 108C had remained in Bristol as a sole Gardner-engined example, the others having Bristol engines. When the opportunity came up to acquire it, Nigel and David thought it was the closest thing to a genuine West Riding example. After years of hard work at Escrick shed, seen below is Nigel and David's handywork, prior to the fitting of the West Riding fleet names, which it now carries. It certainly looks like, and feels like, a West Riding one!!

Now wouldn't it be fantastic to have an actual West Riding FLF to sit side by side with EHT 108C at a rally? Anyone fancy a trip to San Francisco?



*Editor's note. All of West Riding's FLF Lodekkas were fitted with the Cave-Brown-Cave engine cooling system, which involved the use of two radiators, one each side of the destination equipment, instead of the usual radiator in front of the engine. This was intended to provide a source of hot air for interior heating. Note that the examples shown have different cowls or vents, and there were further different cowls in other Tillings group fleets.*

## Ribble Rendezvous

*Mark Byard provides an excellent example of inter-museum co-operation. He also provided the photos.*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 four restorers from the Ribble Vehicle Preservation Trust visited the Museum to check out our 1948 Leyland-bodied Titan PD2/1, West Riding 640 (BHL 682).

They were welcomed with tea and cakes before taking a tour of the Museum exhibits and building. Then specifically came a look at the star attraction in the form of 640. Much time was spent forensically examining the bus, to assist them in restoring a similar Ribble example seen below.

Ribble, 1349 (DRN 289), is a 1950 PD2/3 with a similar, but not identical, lowbridge Leyland body. The most obvious differences are the destination layout, sliding windows instead of half drop, and the provision of platform doors, plus of course the fact that the PD2/3 was eight feet wide, whereas the PD2/1 was only 7'6" wide.

That said, there are many similarities, and the lads certainly kept themselves busy taking numerous photographs of the interior and exterior detailing.

It was very interesting to hear that they face a similar challenge to that experienced by us in 2009. Our PD2 had been partly restored and then laid up with many parts scattered around the bus. Fortunately for us, we found most of them, but the Ribble lads seem to be less confident that everything is there!

One key missing item is a front windscreen, which we think we may have somewhere in Ravensthorpe, if we can find it!!

The custodian of BHL, Richard Hall, supported by Mark Byard, were on hand to answer their questions and three hours after arrival, they had gained all the detail they needed.

We look forward to welcoming them back to the Museum with a restored PD2/3 in the years to come.



*Ribble Leyland Titan PD2/3 1349 (DRN289) on the left awaits restoration, while West Riding PD2/1 640 (BHL682) on the right is beautifully restored. Both have lowbridge Leyland bodies, but that on 1349 is 8'0" wide whereas that on 640 is 7'6" wide. Interestingly Leyland used the same upper deck front windows and windscreens for both models, which accounts for the considerable taper in the front bay on the wider Ribble bus.*





*Peter Kemp, Jonathan Cadwallader, Andrew Lowe and Edgar Shepherd are seen in the picture above at the end of their visit, looking extremely pleased with what they had seen. The key purpose of the visit was to seek out the many details on our restored bus to enable their project to continue. Red Wulfrunian 970 on the right provides a reminder that Ribble had Wulfrunian demonstrator 7800DA on loan in Autumn 1961. Had things turned out differently, perhaps they might have been visiting the museum to check out the details to aid the restoration of a Ribble Wulfrunian!*

## Duplicate and Triplicate Registration Numbers

*Basil Hancock highlights five pairs of West Riding buses which had almost identical registration numbers.*

In the history of British bus operations there have been some examples of two buses carrying the same registration letters and numbers, although with the later one either as a reversed version of the first (e.g., Midland Red had both GHA794 and 794GHA), or with an additional year suffix letter.

West Riding was one operator to which the latter applied, and perhaps uniquely had three different looking buses with the same registration number at different times (give or take a suffix letter).

As shown below, in total there were five buses, whose registrations were later repeated, comprising two Leyland Tiger PS1/1 single deckers with dual-purpose 35-seat

Barnaby bodies dating from 1948, and three Daimler CVD6 chassis with Strachans 55-seat lowbridge double deck bodies, also dating from 1948. All five buses had been acquired from J.Bullock & Sons in September 1950 and had registration numbers in the BHL series.

The five later duplicate BHLs were from the final batch of Guy Wulfrunians.

However the prize must go to Leyland Tiger 290 which was rebodied as a lowbridge double decker in 1956 by Roe and renumbered 789, the chassis being reclassified as a Tiger PS1 at the same time.

So there were three visually very different vehicles in West Riding's history which carried the same BHL372 on their registration plates. Does anyone know of a similar occurrence with any other operator?

Reg No.	Fleet No.		Chassis	Body	New	Withdrawn
	Bullocks	West Riding				
BHL371	289	289	Leyland Tiger PS1/1	Barnaby DP35F	February 1948	1963
BHL371C		1020	Guy Wulfrunian	Roe H43/32F	March 1965	January 1972
BHL372	290	290	Leyland Tiger PS1/1	Barnaby DP35F	May 1948	1956
BHL372		789	Leyland Tiger PS1	Roe L27/26R	June 1956	1965
BHL372C		1021	Guy Wulfrunian	Roe H43/32F	March 1965	April 1970
BHL373	310	310	Daimler CVD6	Strachans L27/28R	June 1948	1959
BHL373C		1022	Guy Wulfrunian	Roe H43/32F	March 1965	May 1972
BHL374	311	311	Daimler CVD6	Strachans L27/28R	June 1948	1959
BHL374C		1023	Guy Wulfrunian	Roe H43/32F	March 1965	January 1972
BHL375	312	312	Daimler CVD6	Strachans L27/28R	June 1948	1955
BHL375C		1024	Guy Wulfrunian	Roe H43/32F	March 1965	January 1970

*A list of all known duplicated registration numbers in the West Riding fleet.*

Perhaps one reason that West Riding had a number of duplicates was that, until the reorganisation of licensing and registration in 1974, virtually all registrations used the Wakefield letters HL, so it was only a matter of time until the same prefix came round again.

In this case, the BHL combination was used from late 1947 to early 1949 (by both Bullock and West Riding), then again in 1965 with a C suffix and once more in 1972 with a K suffix.

Therefore it was just a matter of chance if the three numbers duplicated those used previously on a West Riding bus.

Four of the original buses were withdrawn before the second buses with the same combination of letters and numbers took to the road. The only exception was the rebodied Tiger, 789, which was withdrawn at an unspecified date in 1965.

It is therefore just possible that BHL372 could have stood alongside BHL372C, which arrived in March 1965. It is highly unlikely, but what a picture that would have made.

As far as is known no other West Riding buses had duplicate registration numbers.

But what about Yorkshire Woollen and other local fleets? Can any readers provide information?



*BHL374, ex-Bullock Daimler CVD6 311, which retained the same fleet number with West Riding, is seen in Marshgate Bus Station in Doncaster. It had a lowbridge Strachans body and was new in June 1948. The side windows have the appearance of Roe bodies rather than the Strachans bodies of the time. (RHG Simpson)*



*BHL374C, West Riding Guy Wulfrunian 1023, is seen in Leeds Central Bus Station on 15 October 1971. It was one of the last 30 Wulfrunians built, which were Mk2 models with a modified front suspension. None attained seven years of service and 1023 would be withdrawn three months after this photo was taken. (Basil Hancock).*



## A Moquette Mystery

*Basil Hancock looks at a seat upholstery pattern which seems to have come in various colours.*

In the April edition of *Bus & Coach Preservation* magazine there was an article on the restoration of Bradford BUT-9611T-Weymann trolleybus 758.

One of the photographs showed the blue Holdsworth upholstery used in the vehicle.

This looked very familiar, and it soon became clear that the same moquette pattern had been used by West Riding in the earlier Wulfrunians, up to 958, but in a red colour.



*The blue Holdsworth seat moquette used in Bradford BUT 9611T-Weymann trolleybus 758 (left) has the same basic pattern as the red version (right), used in the first 71 West Riding Guy Wulfrunians. (Bus and Coach Preservation, Mark Byard)*

Then Mark Byard provided a photograph of the lower deck of a Roe-bodied West Riding Guy Arab IV of the 818-862 batch, clearly showing the same pattern of upholstery again.

Since West Riding invariably seems to have used green moquette in green buses, it is most likely that this version was green.

It is suggested that this moquette, perhaps in a green colour, may have been used in other vehicles too, such as AEC Reliances 920-931 and Leyland Leopards 985-997. The first version of the moquette was in use in Bradford 758 in 1951, so potentially if West Riding had used the pattern, it could go back as far as 1951 too.



*The rear lower saloon of a West Riding Guy Arab IV with lowbridge bodywork from the 818-862 batch, showing the same pattern of upholstery. However, it is believed that this moquette was green. (Mark Byard)*





Two of the bus types mentioned above are seen at Featherstone depot on 13 June 1972. On the right is Guy Arab IV-Roe 463 (ex-860) and next to it is AEC Reliance 2MU3RV-Roe 104 (ex-923) sporting the last type of West Riding fleetname before NBC liveries took over. Beyond are Roe-bodied Daimler Fleetlines 635 (200) and 638 (203). What colour and pattern of moquette did the first two buses have when new? Despite the green livery being on the way out, all four buses are very well presented. (Basil Hancock)

So now we have blue, red and potentially green versions of the same pattern. Were there any more colours?

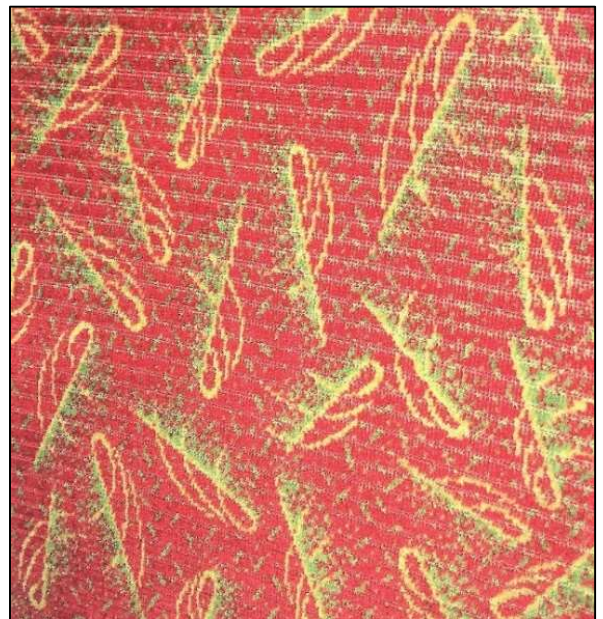
The discovery of a possible green version poses an interesting question. It is known that the first 71 West Riding Guy Wulfrunians (863-913 and 939-958) had this pattern of upholstery, and all colour interior views of these vehicles appear to confirm that the seats were red.

However, if there was a green version used elsewhere by the company, could the original green Wulfrunians, 904-913 and 939-953, have had green seats? Any thoughts on this would be gratefully received.

Just to add to the mystery, Charles H Roe took some official black and white photographs, including interiors, of green 953, but what colour the seats were is not known.

For the record, the remaining 55 Wulfrunians, 960-984 and 1000-1029, had a different red upholstery, which can be seen today in restored 970.

Whether secondhand Wulfrunians 938 (Lancashire United) and 959 (West Wales) retained their original upholstery or were retrimmed in a West Riding pattern is not known. Does anyone know? Certainly ex-County 995 and 996 retained their original moquette in a different pattern, as can be seen on 995 today.



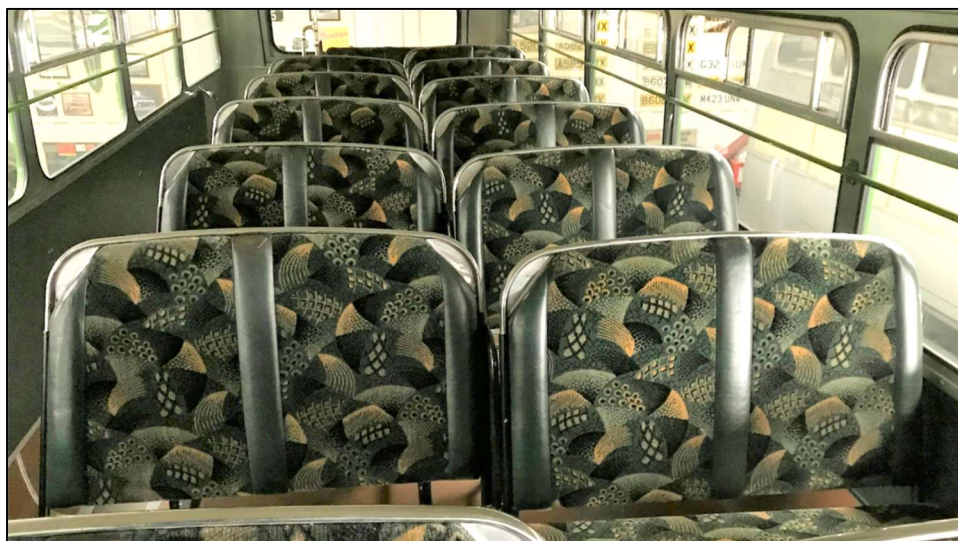
The rear lower saloon of West Riding Guy Wulfrunian 953 (left), seen in an official Charles H Roe photo when new. This was the last of its batch to be painted green when new, the last five being red buses. But what colour was the Holdsworth seat moquette? On the right is the later red seat moquette used in the last 55 West Riding Guy Wulfrunians, including our own 970, showing its different pattern.

(Basil Hancock Collection Mark Byard)



It should be noted that the examples shown above involve bodies built by both Charles H Roe and Weymann, so clearly the pattern was not restricted to any one bodybuilder, but reflects the operator's selection, as was typical of the era.

West Riding would have used many other patterns of moquette over the years, for example that used in beautifully restored Guy Arab IV 855 below.



As restored, Mark Byard's West Riding Guy Arab IV 855 uses a different pattern of green upholstery. This was the pattern used in the later years of the Guy Arabs' lives and the upholstery is original, brought back to life by many hours of deep cleaning. This image also demonstrates the four abreast seating, arranged in slightly set back pairs, in the lowbridge upper deck. (Mark Byard)

## An Appeal for Articles

West Riding Omnibus is intended to cover the vehicles, operations and news of the WROMT and the Dewsbury Bus Museum and to include historical and other articles, mainly covering the former West Riding of Yorkshire.

The articles in this issue largely involve West Riding and B&S Motor Services, but I would like to broaden its coverage to other operators in the former West Riding, such as County Motors, Hanson, Hebble, Yorkshire Woollen and the many independent operators. Examples include Black Prince,

Heaps, Independent Coachways, Kippax & District, Ledgard, South Yorkshire, Wallace Arnold, and J Wood & Sons, to name just a few, but there are many more.

And of course the municipal operators, Bradford, Halifax Huddersfield, Leeds and Todmorden, plus their Joint Committees, and the later PTE and post-deregulation private operators too. There is no reason not to include West Yorkshire Road Car and Yorkshire Traction occasionally either since they both partly operated in the West Riding.



It would be nice to be able to include an article on an operator, particularly some of the smaller ones, in each issue, so I would welcome any contributions. Ideally each feature should cover around four pages, with photos.

We don't want to tread on the toes of other societies and organisations, but if you have anything of interest on any of the above, or for that matter on topics outside of the region, either historical or of current relevance, please let me know.

So please put pen to paper, or mouse to keyboard and let me have some contributions.

To kick off, an article on a Yorkshire Woollen District subject would be much appreciated.

This is your newsletter and I would welcome your contributions and ideas.

Over to you.

## Tailpiece

*Basil Hancock remembers some West Riding double deckers which often seem to get overlooked.*

Often forgotten amongst the secondhand buses bought by West Riding in the early days of its NBC ownership are the five Dennis Loline IIIs which came from Halifax Joint Omnibus Committee. They were the very last Loline built, in 1967, and were fitted with Northern Counties forward entrance bodies with high backed seats. They were very much an oddity in the Halifax fleets (although actually there were quite a few unusual buses), which reflected the unique views of the then General Manager, Geoffrey Hilditch.

Halifax 300-304 were purchased by West Riding in 1970 and initially numbered 464-468, becoming 549-553 in late 1971. They were withdrawn in 1977 and sadly all went for scrap. None was more than ten years old, but they were obsolete in a world of one-person operation.

What a tragedy that none of these fine buses was preserved. And who would have thought that less than twenty years later Dennis would be back as a major, and soon to become the largest, bus builder in the UK?

Interestingly, the late Robin Hannay, author of a number of books on Guy Motors and a former employee of the company, was later in his career the Dennis bus salesman, and the sale of these buses to Halifax was one of his achievements.

He recorded that sales of Lolines were restricted because the General Manager of Dennis would not allow more than one Loline chassis to be built each month, preferring to build lorries and fire engines. Otherwise there would have been more.

All photos by Basil Hancock.



*Former Halifax Dennis Loline 301 is seen, caught by the early morning sun, in Leeds Central Bus Station on 9 November 1971 with its original West Riding fleet number 465, just days before being renumbered to 550. Note the translucent orange roof panel. It is seen again in the forecourt of Belle Isle depot in NBC red livery on 15 January 1976. The Loline was essentially a license-built version of the Bristol Lodekka (because Bristol and ECW were state-owned, they were forbidden to sell on the open market until an exchange of shares with Leyland later in 1967), and the similarity to an FLF Lodekka is obvious. West Riding needed lowheight buses, so the Lolines were an obvious choice. The high backed seats can be clearly seen in the right hand view.*



*Halifax 304 was the last of the batch and was widely thought at the time to be the last full size bus that Dennis would ever build. How wrong we were. Here it is seen on the left as West Riding 553 in Wakefield Bus Station in green livery on 13 May 1973, sporting the last traditional West Riding fleetname, complete with White Rose. Note the sliding ventilator in the upper deck rear emergency window. On the right it is newly repainted in NBC red (for the second time) on 15 January 1976 with Roe-bodied Daimler Fleetline 659 (formerly 224) behind it.*

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