

No. 25 - JUNE 2024



Rossie Motors, taking its name from its home village of Rossington, near Doncaster was one of the independent operators that served the South Yorkshire coalfield communities until the South Yorkshire PTE acquired six of them. Rossie Motors (Rossington) Ltd, as the business was incorporated from 1952, was taken over on 30 December 1980 along with five double-deckers. FWW 430, a Daimler CVD6 with 35-seat Plaxton coach body, predated the formation of the limited company. It was new to the Morpus family's Rossie business in December 1946 and was withdrawn in 1961. It was photographed in Doncaster's Waterdale bus station which, until Doncaster South bus station was opened, was also the main departure point for all express services from the town. This area has now been grassed over and mature trees have grown. (Photographer Robin Hannay, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RH 2290)

INTHIS ISSUE

Publicity Corner • VIP visitors • NBC oddments
When Delaine helped Lincolnshire • Holidays with Northern and more!

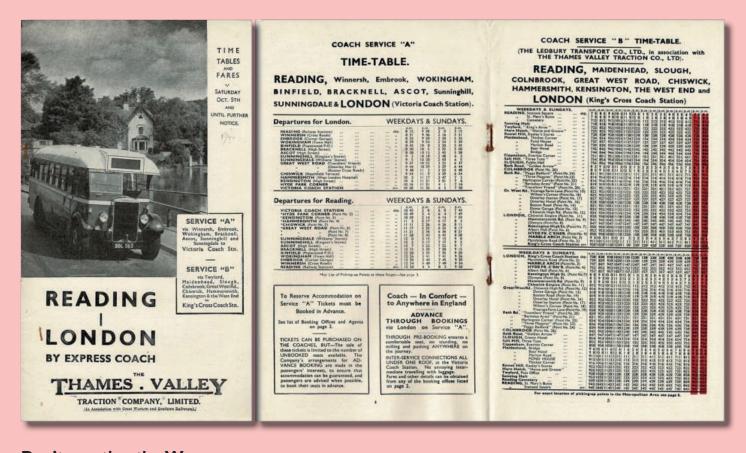
Publicity Corner

Christmas services in Birmingham

In 1968, Birmingham City Transport still offered Christmas Day services. Operated by "volunteer crews", these ran only for four hours. Some were based on their night service equivalents, with others serving local hospitals.

Christmas Day services in Birmingham ran until 1974, five years after BCT was absorbed into the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive.





Don't mention the War

This 1940 Thames Valley timetable shows the two services linking Reading and London – the A via Ascot and B via Slough. An ECW-bodied Leyland Tiger — a service bus rather than the coaches advertised in the timetable — adorns the front cover.

The B service is shown as operated by The Ledbury Transport Co. Ltd - which traded as Thackray's Way - a company that Thames Valley purchased in 1936. There is no mention in the timetable of World War Two affecting the operation.

North Western

Midland Red and North Western operated jointly on the Manchester-Birmingham-London corridor. This 1961 timetable is illustrated with an AEC Reliance — definitely a North Western produced publication.

Two years after the MI motorway had opened between Dunchurch and Watford, it was being well-used, although a longer route via Banbury and Oxford was still being operated, as was a connection with a Standerwick or Scout service for passengers travelling to and from points bypassed by the MI between Dunchurch and Fenny Stratford and the north London suburbs of Barnet and North Finchley; the timetable advises that they change coaches either at Digbeth coach station in Birmingham or at the Potteries Café in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Meals and snacks were available from the cafes at Digbeth and at Victoria Coach Station, where "packed snacks are also available". All services made a ten minute stop at the Potteries Café for what are described as "light refreshments".

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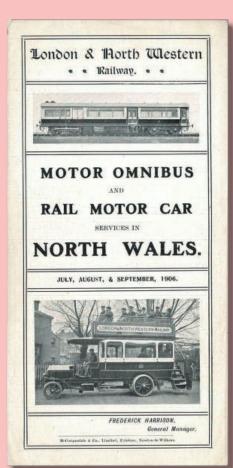
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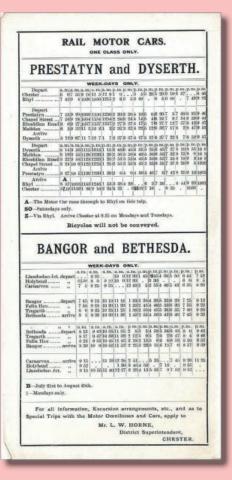
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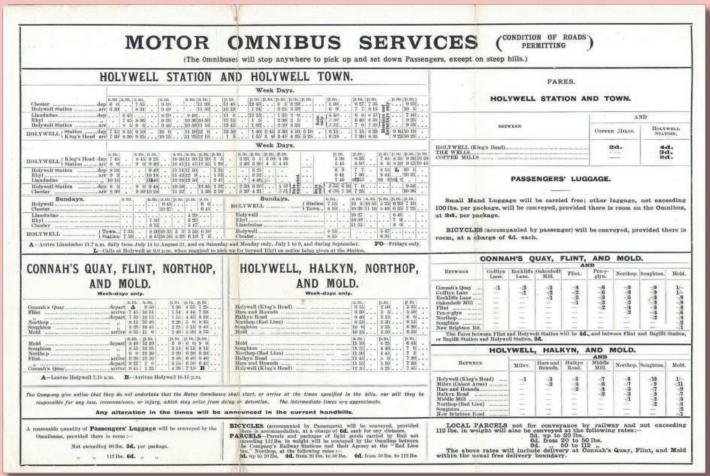
Edwardian timetables with fares

One of the oldest timetables we've come across so far. This 1906 timetable is for early motor bus services in north Wales provided by London & North Western Railway, as well as the steampowered rail motor car services it operated on two branch lines.

These services had all begun in the previous year, with LNWR pulling its buses out of the area in April 1915. The buses operated "condition of roads permitting" and carried passengers' bicycles and luggage up to 100 lb per package "provided there is room". Note that the bus timetable also has a table of fares charged.





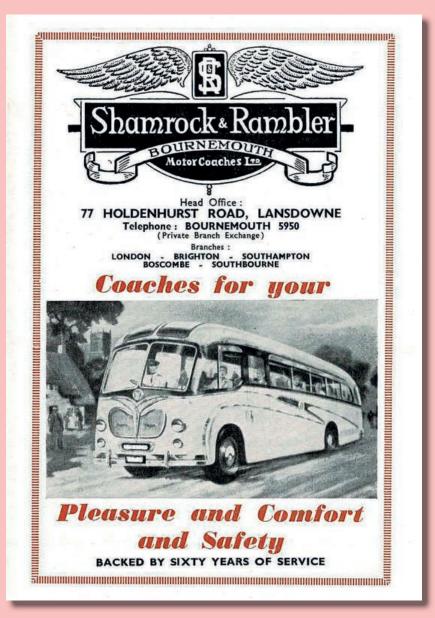


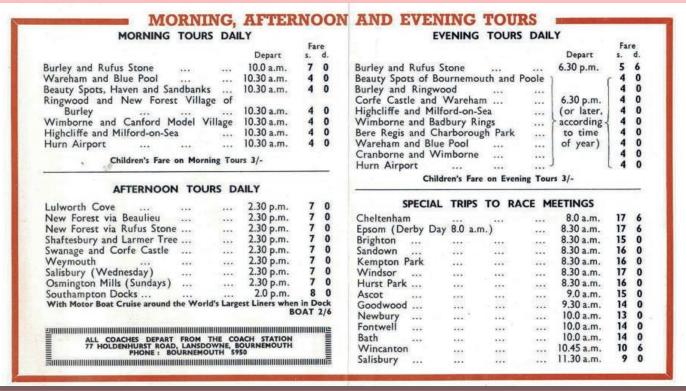
Coach trips to watch other people at work

This Bournemouth-based Shamrock & Rambler day tours leaflet is not dated, but we think it is from the 1950s. The Duple Vega coach depicted on the cover is of a design built between 1955 and 1958. Please let us know if you can date it more accurately.

A full array of destinations is offered, with possibly the most interesting being a full-day tour to the Morris factory in Oxford (including Tea). There are also afternoon tours to Southampton Docks with an optional motor boat cruise to get up close to the world's largest ocean liners and evening tours to Hurn Airport at a time when more people went to airports to watch other people using aeroplanes than to catch a flight for themselves.

Shamrock & Rambler was a very longestablished coach operator, for many years managed jointly by George Ewer and United Transport Group, although in 1966 Tilling bought United Transport's shares and placed S&R under Hants & Dorset control.





VIP visitors – forsooth!

Following on from the completion of our new Droitwich Centre, we have had several visits from organisations outside our normal orbit to view our impressive storage pod, which is quite advanced across the whole archives sector.

Dr Mike Rogers is The National Archives' sector development manager for the Midlands and transport lead. Mike has been involved with us for several years and indeed the concept of the storage pod was his suggestion. 'The collection has come a very long way in recent years and this is hugely impressive,' he says.







We have had two visits from The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. It plans to move its archives from the base beside the actual building in central Stratford, and relocate to a large building about ten minutes away. Its representatives were highly impressed with the pod, but also that we have everything now in conservation boxes, fully labelled and catalogued.

Finally, we have had requests to show the personal lift in action, accessing the uppermost two shelves. Here we see a volunteer – let's call him 'Martin' – demonstrating the lift in action.



When the die was cast for NBC to die

Two communications from the spring of 1986, one external and one internal, chronicle events from the momentous year when bus services in Great Britain outside London were deregulated and the state-owned National Bus Company (NBC) was privatised out of existence.

A Department of Transport press release dated 9 April announced that, "at the request of NBC", transport secretary Nicholas Ridley confirmed that its subsidiaries would be sold individually or as part of a group of companies which contained no other bus-operating subsidiaries.

This was to be undertaken speedily, as the aim was to sell as many as possible, especially those where NBC staff proposed to mount an early buyout, before deregulation took effect on 26 October. New NBC chairman Rodney Lund had taken up his position two days earlier and the deadline for NBC to submit its disposal programme to Ridley had now been extended from 6 April to 16 May.

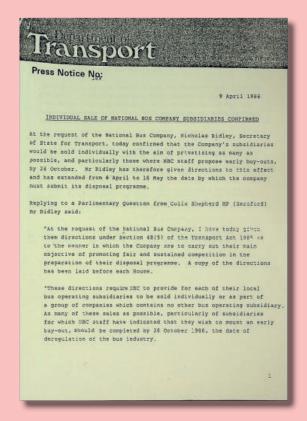
"I am glad that many local managements and employees are already preparing bids for their subsidiaries and NBC has recently advertised all its subsidiaries in the press inviting expressions of interest from other parties," Ridley said.

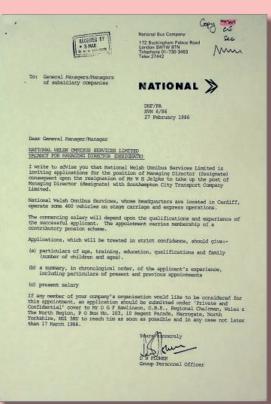
As things turned out, only four management buyouts were completed before Deregulation Day — Devon General, Badgerline, Cheltenham & Gloucester and Southern Vectis.

The minister had conveyed his decision to sell the subsidiaries separately, rather than in bundles of non-contiguous units, at a conference of NBC managers in February 1986, so a communication sent to all general managers and managers of the subsidiary companies on the 27th of that month would have been one of the last of its kind, advertising a vacancy for a managing director (designate) at a 400-vehicle regional subsidiary that went on to be sold in May the following year.

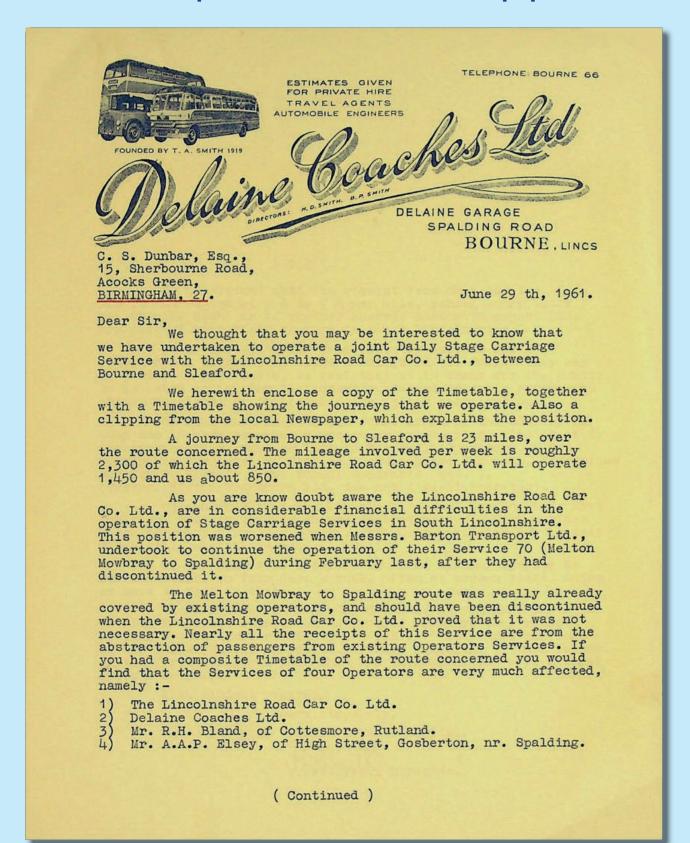
Bill Jelpke was resigning from that position at National Welsh Omnibus Services to join the municipal sector in a similar capacity with the arm's length Southampton City Transport Company.

Applications for a successor were to be submitted by March 17 to DGF Rawlinson OBE, chairman of NBC's Wales & The North Region, together with details of their experience, education, qualifications, salary, age and family (number of children and ages). Commencing salary would depend on the successful applicant's qualifications and experience. The notice made no mention of the qualities NBC was seeking for the challenging role of managing a business through a period of great change and uncertainty.

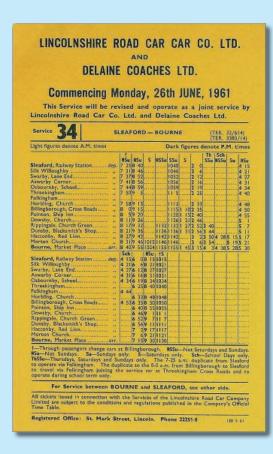




When Delaine helped Lincolnshire and had a pop at Barton



We came across an interesting set of documents from the collection of Charles S Dunbar, a well-known enthusiast, author and consultant prominent in the Midlands area who at different stages of his career was the first editor of Buses Illustrated and editor of Passenger Transport.



Hugh Delaine-Smith, director of Delaine Coaches of Bourne, wrote to him in June 1961, drawing his attention to an agreement with the Lincolnshire Road Car Company for his company to take over about 37% of the operation of the infrequent daily stage carriage service 34 between Bourne and Sleaford.

The 23 mile service was losing money and had been under threat of withdrawal, and the new arrangement saved money by removing the need for Lincolnshire Road Car to maintain an outstation in Bourne. The timetable for the joint operation showed that Delaine operated the first and last journeys of the day to a mid-point at Billingborough where it met the first and last Lincolnshire buses out of Sleaford and passengers, in the words of the timetable, "change cars".

Delaine already operated between Bourne and Haconby on four days a week, often at common times, and hoped to rectify that duplication. Haconby is about four miles north of Bourne and six south of Billingborough.

Hugh Delaine-Smith explained that overall weekly mileage was approximately 2,300, of which Lincolnshire Road Car operated 1,450 and Delaine Coaches about 850. In what he thought might have been one of the first such arrangements between a British Transport Commission operator and a small private company, revenue was to be shared based on mileage each operator covered.

"We feel that the Lincolnshire Road Car Company has the right idea in sharing an unremunerative route with another operator under a pooling system; obviously economies can be made which will benefit the general public."

In writing to Charles Dunbar, he had a bigger message to impart about competition that he clearly regarded as unwelcome, pointing a finger of blame at Barton Transport whose decision to take over Lincolnshire Road Car's "not necessary" service 70 (Melton Mowbray-Spalding) earlier that year had worsened what he described as "considerable financial difficulties" that the Lincolnshire company was experiencing in the provision of stage carriage services in the south of the county.

"We understand that receipts from this service are in the region of 6d to 7d per mile; consequently, there may be some doubt as to whether Barton Transport is pleased with its venture in south Lincolnshire."

In his view, the route was already covered by four existing operators' services, and he argued that nearly all the receipts were coming from the abstraction of passengers from those services provided by Lincolnshire Road Car, Delaine Coaches, R H Bland of Cottesmore and A A P Elsey of Gosberton.

He noted that Barton Transport had recently applied for a "considerable" increase in stage carriage fares. "Whilst it may be acting in good faith, we feel it is wrong for the public to be asked to pay for the losses sustained in its efforts to obtain territory by bulldozing existing operators out.

"We feel that many of the rural areas in the country, if they are to have reasonable passenger transport facilities at a reasonable price, must be left to small operators," he argued, adding for the apparent avoidance of doubt that "reasonable transport" included stage services, excursions and tours, private hire and school contracts and that Barton Transport was not a small operator.

Facebook highlights



As an archive, we can even be topical when required. News that Arriva is closing down its operations in High Wycombe and Aylesbury prompted us to look back to when Kingsbury was the main bus terminus in the latter town and United Counties the main operator - the 'grandfather' of Arriva in the area. The Essex registrations on these buses are a reminder that it had taken over the entire Midland Area of Eastern National in May 1952. GPU 435 was an ECW-bodied Bristol L5G new in 1938 and is on its way to Halton Camp near Wendover, while MPU 40 was an ECW-bodied Leyland Titan PD1A new in 1947 on the 141 to Bedford.

There is also a rear view of an unidentified London Transport RT on the right on the Country Area 301 to Watford. (Roy Marshall collection, ref. RM02/RAM00146).

A photograph taken at the Eastern Coach Works factory in Lowestoft in 1978, showing Bristol VRs and LHs under construction. Not quite the slick production line, with copious use of wooden ladders. A glimpse of a world now gone. (Photographer Peter Mobbs, ref, PM03/01124)



Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley & Dukinfield Transport was what today we would call a joint venture between four local authorities. It started in 1904 as a tramway and electrical generating company. This Northern Countiesbodied Atkinson PL745H was new in May 1956 with unusual centre entrance. SHMD was absorbed into the newly-created South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire (SELNEC) PTE in 1969. (Photographer Reg Westgate, ref. RW03/67602.)



Eastbourne Corporation began bus operation in 1903 and has claims of being the first municipal bus operator in the world. In 1949 it purchased this East Lancs bodied Crossley DD42/5 as its fleet number 37. (Photographer Robin Hannay, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RH03/32604)



Facebook highlights

This Dennis Lancet II with the chassis manufacturer's own coach body had a tale to tell. DYB 982 was new in May 1938 to Pride of the West, Weston-super-Mare, but was then requisitioned by the War Department during World War Two. It was then purchased by Ashmore of Smethwick (trading as Highlander), with whom it is seen here. (Photographer Joe Higham, ref. JH08/0960).





Our most popular posting in the past quarter was this one showing a Gilford 168OT with Beadle dual-door coach body typical of the straight-line style of coach body of the early 1930s before a more curvaceous look became popular as the decade continued. Note the roof-mounted luggage rack. The operator was Bailey Bros., of Deptford, London, SE8. (Photographer Joe Higham, ref. JH08/0968).

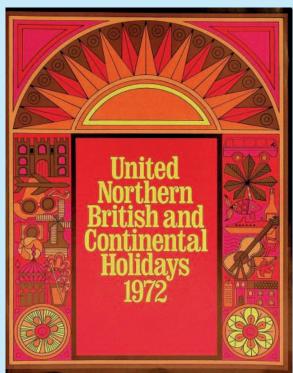
Holidays with Northern

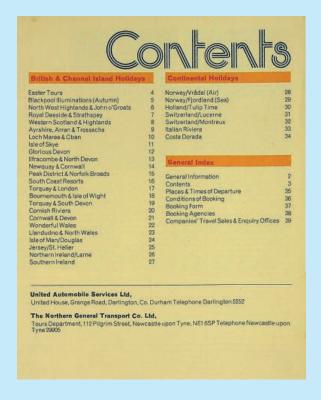
Changing tastes in travel are apparent in this comparison of coach holiday brochures from Northern General for 1958 and 1972, a reminder also of when most of the big regional operators also had large coach fleets.





The 1958 brochure introduced a programme of British, Irish and European holidays of three to 15 days' duration, offering "modern travel by first class luxury coach" and the care of specially selected courier-drivers. of Customers would be fascinated by "quaint villages and differing folklore; the contrast of cities of ancient legend and modern advancement; or the pleasures of fine resorts".





For 1972, by which time the National Bus Company had taken over and Northern's tours were being marketed jointly with those of United and the art of flower power was in vogue, the European element of the programme had been slimmed down from ten to seven. And an addendum slip issued as early as February announced the cancellation of one of two tours offered to Norway and the only ones on offer to Spain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We might guess that the Troubles were discouraging people from holidaying either side of the Irish border.

Donations

We have received the following donations since the start of the year. We are very grateful to all our donors.

Donor	Description
Terry Bowker	Timetables and publicity, tickets and original records
Estate of the late Bob Gray	Mixed collection
Transport Museum, Wythall	MCW/Optare drawings
Colin Duddy	Published books and magazines, timetables and publicity
Ashley Baxter	Books
Brian King	Barton plc accounts and reports
Keith Fender	Photo albums
Geoff Lumb	Mixed collection
Brian Biddescombe	Published books and magazines, timetables and publicity
Keith Whitehead	Published books and magazines
Mike Earle	Timetables and publicity, letters
Leon Daniels	Rules books etc. of several companies and undertakings
Craig Ryan	Slide collection of the late Derek Langford
William Staniforth	Bristol Commercial Vehicles vehicle engineering plans
Mrs J Cunningham	Books, timetables and original records of the late David Cunningham
John S Smith	Published books, magazines, photographs
Arthur Ingram	Glass plate and plastic negatives
Peter Cook	Timetables, magazines and photos
Roger Newport	Chester busway plans
Neil Bigny	Ewer Group enthusiasts' material
Fletcher Family (Cliff Fletcher)	Published books
lan Allred	Published books/magazines; Timetables/publicity
Alan Lambert	Vehicle plans etc.
Dave Bubier	Published books
Jim Stott	Handwritten fleet list
Alan Murray-Rust	Timetables and publicity, tickets, original records and ephemera
Harold Beadles	Timetables and publicity, photographs and original records
Geoff Porter	Published books and magazines
Richard Newman	Timetables and publicity
Robert Smith	Worcestershire CC 'best practice' manuals
Geoffrey Heald	Timetables and publicity

Donations

A particularly interesting donation was the personal collection of Harold Beadles who was originally employed at Mid Wales Motorways of Newtown as a fitter, then started up on his own by purchasing the business of Albert Weaver in 1966.

This merged with Mid Wales Motorways in 1980 when Harold became a director of the combined operation, although that was not to last. Eventually Harold again became independent and along with his wife operated Brenda's Travel Bureau, concentrating on the schools market. Both are now retired.

This is an excellent addition to our collections as we rarely receive material direct from small, family operated concerns which are such an important part of the bus and coach industry story.











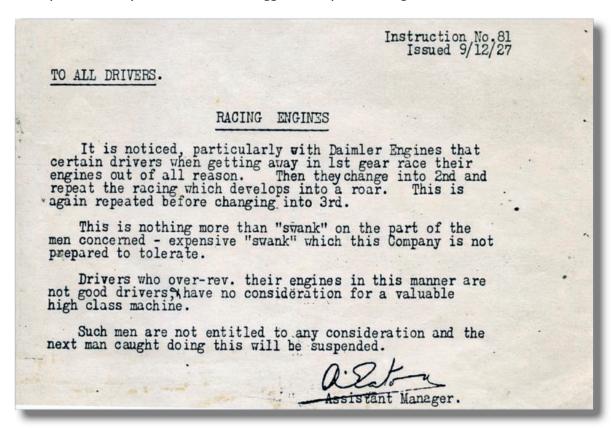
Photo I: A team photo from the postwar Mid Wales Motorways days; Photo 2: A Duple Vista-bodied Bedford OB operating in autumn 1968; Photo 3: Another Bedford/Duple, this time a seven-year-old VAM with Viceroy body at Easter 1977; Photo 4: The rear of Bedford SB / Duple Super Vega YUW 792 in March 1970 when it was ten years old; Photo 5: Brenda's Travel operated this Leyland Atlantean with open-top Park Royal body. It was new to SELNEC PTE in 1972 and operated in this form with Wallace Arnold-owned Hardwick's Services and East Yorkshire Motor Services in Scarborough, and on a sightseeing tour in Glasgow.

No room for swank

We found this notice recently in the name of A Eaton, assistant manager of an operator we have been unable to identify, warning drivers in December 1927 of dire consequences if they continued to over-rev engines in a manner that showed "no consideration for a valuable high-class machine".

It had been noted that, particularly with Daimler engines, these miscreants were racing their engines "out of all reason" when getting away in first gear, repeated the abuse when changing into second with the engine developing into a roar and did the same again changing into third.

"This is nothing more than 'swank' on the part of the men concerned — expensive 'swank' which this company is not prepared to tolerate...such men are not entitled to any consideration and the next man caught doing this will be suspended." Any ideas of who this aggrieved operator might have been?



Spreading the word

Album — the Association of Local Bus Undertaking Managers (https://www.albumbus.co.uk) is a membership organisation for municipal and independent bus operators, with around 150 members. Its annual conference was held in Warrington this year and it kindly provided space for us to have a display at the hotel.

The display stand showed lots of photographs from our collections, and also described the type of material we are looking for to complete the picture. Manned by our trustee Neil Barker, the event was a successful one for us with a lot of interest expressed and some excellent contacts established. We are particularly pleased about this, as this type of operator is currently under-represented in our collections.



Delivered with style

Working with our friends at the Transport Museum, Wythall (https://wythall.org.uk) we recently accepted a donation from them of a large number of MCW and Optare vehicle plans which the museum kindly delivered to us. And what a delivery vehicle. This classic ECW-bodied Bristol RE in Cheltenham District livery is seen unloading outside our original Droitwich premises, which we are retaining for the short term while we cope with the very significant influx of donated material.



How to access our collection

We have three Research Centres, each holding unique material:

- Droitwich, for original records
- Walsall, for publicity items and publications
- Acton, for London Transport records and timetables Search our online catalogue at www.busarchive.org.uk.



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