



Crews and waiting passengers in Aldershot bus station are looking with some puzzlement at the revolutionary double-decker arriving on route 6 from Petersfield, ready to reverse on to stand E. STF 90 was one of Leyland's two prototype Low Floor Double-Deckers (LFDD) with a turbo charged engine on the rear platform. Its 62-seat body, built by Saunders-Roe at Beaumaris in Anglesey, had a full-width driver's cab accessed through a sliding door at the front of the lower saloon. Aldershot & District (A&D) was one of several British Electric Traction (BET) companies to test it in service in 1954/55, their feedback helping Leyland evolve its ideas into the front-entrance Atlantean produced from 1958. BET fleets were among the Atlantean's first customers, but A&D wasn't one of them. Its double-deckers all had front engines, the last arriving in 1965, and it was 1971 before its first rear-engined single-deckers arrived. Nor did the trial cause it to buy from Leyland: it only ever operated nine, seven at its formation in 1912 and two allocated to the company in wartime 30 years later.

(Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/A23140)

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Chambers of Bures • Official Opening • Donations • New Book

News from The Archive

Maintaining the environment

Archivist Elizabeth Shuck explains how we ensure that our growing collection is stored in near perfect climatic conditions









































At ‘The Bus Archive’, we maintain our collections across three sites, Walsall, Droitwich and Acton. Followers of our progress over the last few years will know that at our Droitwich site one year ago we opened a purpose-built storage facility known as ‘The Pod’.

In a nutshell, ‘The Pod’ is a box within a box. Its highly insulated walls work to maintain a constant temperature and humidity. This is monitored via digital sensors that allow us to record data 24 hours a day. ‘The Pod’ has a mechanical dehumidifier which can be switched on when needed, but after an initial period of settling in, the climate in ‘The Pod’ has now reached where we want it to be (around 40% relative humidity and 17 degrees Celsius).

We have now done what was always intended for ‘The Pod’ and turned the dehumidifier off. Pleasingly, the data shows that ‘The Pod’ environment remains very stable without mechanical intervention, a testament to the quality of the design and building materials.

It is important to maintain good environmental conditions in archives for a couple of reasons. The prevention of mould growth and cosy environments for archival pests are some of these, as well as ensuring that continuous fluctuation in the water content of paper does not result in warping or seizing-up of documents that, over time, may make them impossible to open-up and access.

Although all ‘The Bus Archive’ storage sites are not as new and efficient as ‘The Pod’, we are working to improve the climatic environments across all the places where our collections are housed. This includes the recent introduction of remote sensors at the Walsall store rooms. We have used the data gathered from there so far to start a programme of dehumidification and temperature adjustment to bring climatic levels to where they should ideally be, although I’m pleased to say there is no great cause for alarm at present.

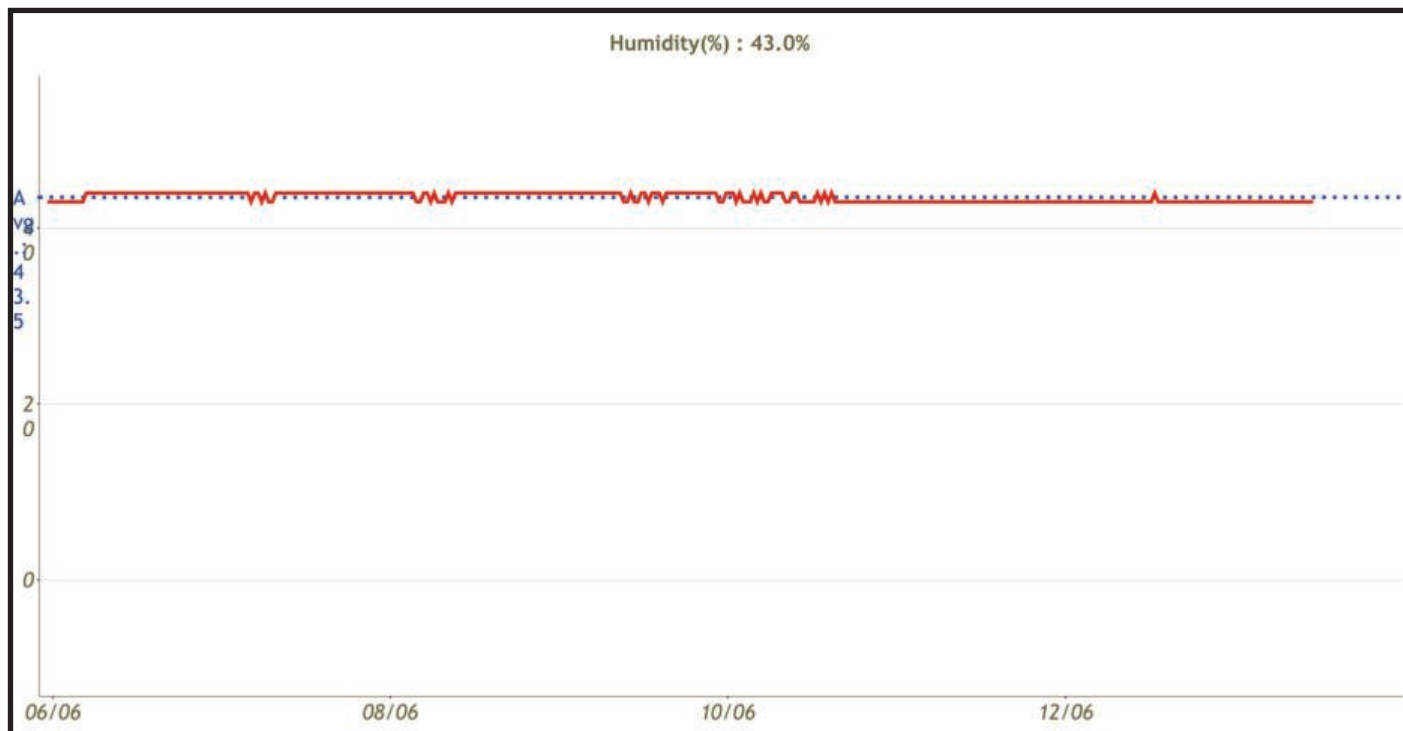
Channel ↕	Status ↕	Permission	Sensor Readings						Latest Updated ↕
 Walsall Room 1 SN: D138***HWS1			 16.3	 61.0	 0.0	 3.0	 -72	 USB	 14 minutes ago
 Walsall Room 2 SN: TR3Q***6WS1			 16.1	 60.0	 0.0	 2.9	 -69	 USB	 9 minutes ago
 Walsall Room 7 SN: E45***WS1			 20.6	 56.0	 0.0	 3.0	 -52	 USB	 3 minutes ago
 Droitwich Pod SN: 924***WS1			 17.7	 43.0	 0.0	 2.8	 -87	 USB	 5 minutes ago

The online ‘dashboard’ showing the condition of each storage room. Readings are taken every 30 minutes.

Maintaining the environment *(continued)*

Manual dehumidification and air conditioning adjustment requires a little more work than the passivity of 'The Pod', but it is well worth it to ensure the survival of our collections into the future.

The results of the readings can be shown in graph form over time. This is the Droitwich Pod humidity over one week.



There is one of these sensors (*right*) in a storage box in every store room.

The Ubibot WSI is a Wi-Fi sensor that measures temperature, humidity, ambient light and vibration and regularly uploads data to a free cloud based service. The cloud service logs the data and allows the user to download data, view charts and set up App based push notifications, email and text messages on high or low alarms. The WSI has built-in memory so no data is lost if the Wi-Fi connection is temporarily lost - data automatically uploads when the connection is re-established.

Temperature sensor: -20°C to 60°C

Humidity sensor: 0 to 100%

Ambient light sensor: 0 to 83 klux

Vibration index sensor: -16 to 16 g



Facebook highlights

Here are the six most-liked posts from the last quarter. The captions are highly abridged from the original posts; for full stories behind the operators and the vehicles go to <https://www.facebook.com/thebusarchive/>.



Astill & Jordan of Ratby operated HKL 857, a former Maidstone & District Bristol K6A with Weymann body, on its stage service to Leicester from 1959 to 1965, one of three similar vehicles in the fleet at that time. (Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/014170)

An East Kent MCW Metroliner coach drops off on The Broadway in Bexleyheath in 1991. 8843 (6540 FN) was originally registered FKK 843Y.

(Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/UBB97)



Armchair Passenger Transport was one of the leading operators of high quality coach charters in London in the 1980s and 1990s. This early 1990s view is of a typical Armchair Leyland Tiger, G407 XMK, with a smart 50-seat Plaxton Paramount 3500 body that was new in April 1990. It was one of four that were delivered with the registrations G607-610 XMD but were changed within weeks to G404 XMK and G406-408 XMK.

(Photographer J Rowley, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. JR01/99209)

Facebook highlights



A charming view of Onslow Street Bus Station, Guildford in September 1972, showing the early days of The Thames Valley and Aldershot Omnibus Co. Ltd., or Alder Valley as it was known to the public, although the vehicles here are still in the livery of Aldershot & District, one of the two predecessor companies, the other being Thames Valley Traction. Two Bristol RESLs are in view: CCG 295K, fleet number 457, leaving on route 48 to Woking and Chertsey had a 40-seat ECW body. To the left is 459 (CHO 691K), also a Bristol RESL but with 40-seat bodywork by Marshall. These were some of Aldershot & District's first rear-engined buses. (Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/MAA19)

Southampton City Transport 183 (PCR 306M) parked up when four years old between a couple of East Lancs-bodied AEC Regent Vs. It shows the common style of Southampton Atlantean with an East Lancs standard body featuring low level curved windscreen, five-bay bodywork in a bright ivory and red livery.

(Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/M12C29)



By far the most popular post was of Midland Red 6390 (YHA 390J) in Evesham High Street in August 1979. This Plaxton Derwent-bodied Ford R192 had been new as a 45-seater in 1971 as part of a substantial intake of 140 of the type over four years. By 1978 a need had been identified for a midi-sized bus and a dozen of the batch was the

subject of some drastic surgery. The body and chassis were separated and overhauled. Two bays were taken out of the body and the wheelbase of the chassis was reduced by 40in, bringing the overall length of the bus down to 22ft 10in. The fuel tank and batteries were moved to the extreme rear to help with weight distribution and, when everything was put back together, 27 seats were fitted inside. The result was quite a neat looking small bus.

(Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/MCE44)

Surplus stock, photographs and lots more...

There are several ways you can support The Bus Archive. You can make a regular cash donation and become a Friend of the Archive – more details in the next issue – or you can make your own collection more complete by buying surplus books, publicity items (timetables etc) and photographs from us.

Photographs

We have joined with our sister organisation The Omnibus Society to offer copies of our photograph collection with The Transport Library.

There are now over 117,000 images available to purchase and on average 1,500 new items are added every month. Omnibus Society members get generous discounts on the purchase price.

Recent additions are Roy Marshall photos of Eastern Scottish, Isle of Man Transport, Northern General (including subsidiaries), United Counties and Wilts & Dorset.



Here is a recent addition to The Transport Library. Scottish Omnibuses A631 and A637 (RSC 631 and RSC 637), photographed at Aberfoyle in the Trossachs while on a multi-vehicle tour, were ECW-bodied Bristol MW coaches from a batch of 20 new in 1958. Originally 38-seaters for

extended tours, these two were reconfigured with 40 seats in 1965 and have the Eastern Scottish fleetname that the company adopted from late 1964.

(Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. RM02/20727)

Books, timetables, publicity

We are grateful for all the donated books, magazines and publicity material we receive every year. Anything we don't already have we add to our collection, but for items we already have are offered for sale, through BUSMART which brings in valuable funds for our charity.

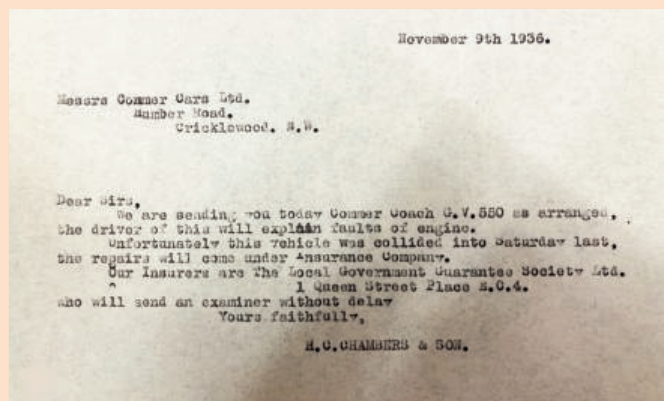
There are three branches of BUSMART activity:

- eBay: follow our main account 'busarchive', and also our volunteer seller's account, 'keith2380'
- BUSMART sales catalogue which is published three times a year and sent out to nearly 1,000 people. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, email hello@busarchive.org.uk
- Online at busmart.org.uk where we have catalogues of all our surplus material for sale

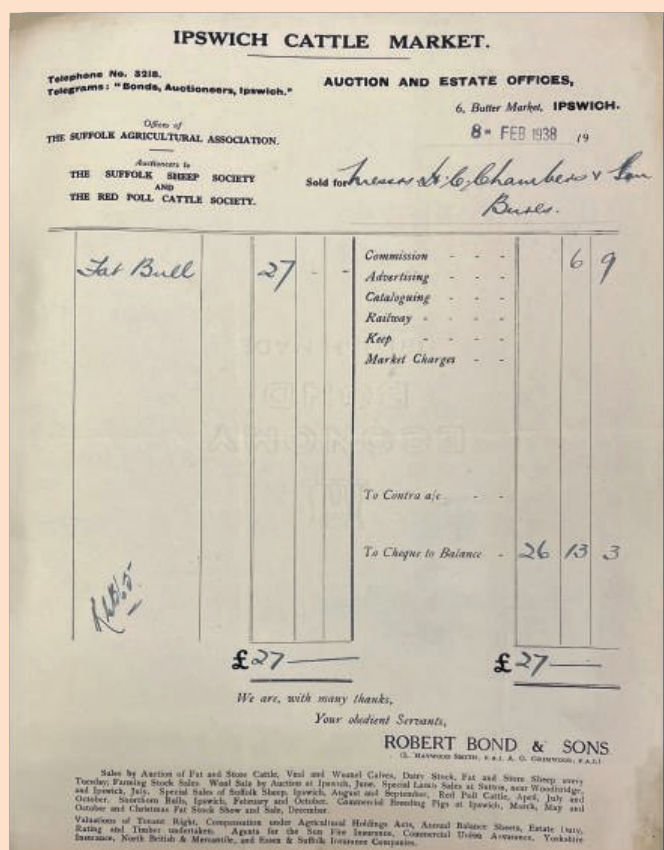
Chambers of Bures

The Bus Archive has recently received a large number of records of H C Chambers & Son of Bures, Suffolk, that lays claim to being the oldest bus company in England.

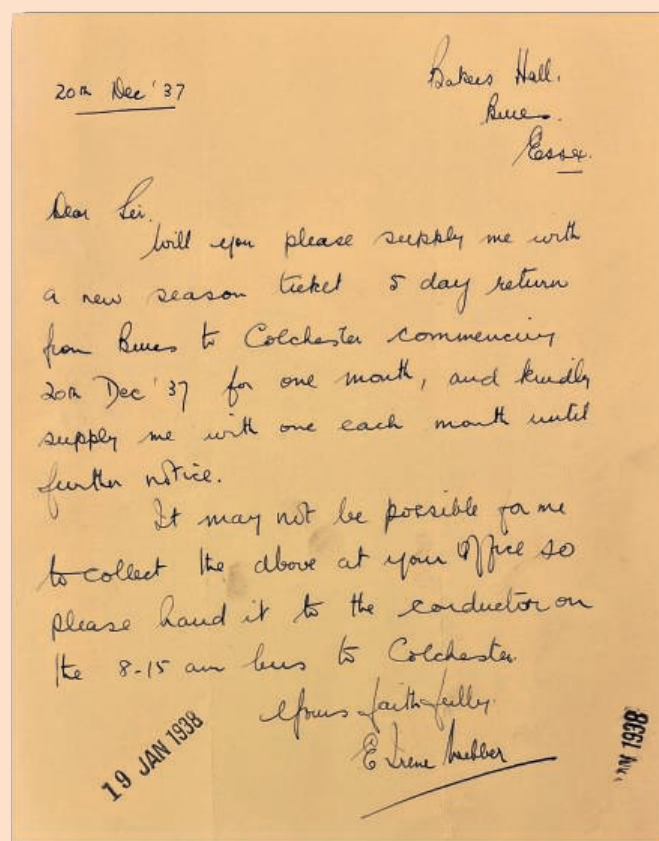
Henry Christopher Chambers founded it in 1877 to manufacture horse saddles, moving later into passenger transport with horse-drawn vehicles and introducing its first motorbuses during World War One. It remained in family ownership for four generations until Go-Ahead Group acquired the business in June 2012, retaining the Chambers name until this year when it rebranded all its East Anglia operations as Konectbus.



The oldest of the three documents shown here dates from November 1936 when a Commer coach, registration GV 550, was being returned to the manufacturer for engine repairs following an accident in which another vehicle had collided with it. The letter advised that Chambers's insurer, the Local Government Guarantee Society would send one of its examiners "without delay".



A receipt from Ipswich Cattle Market dated 8 February 1938 provides evidence that Chambers diversified between the world wars into other activities including farming. The market had sold a fat bull for £27, for which it charged 6/9d commission. £27 in 1938 is the equivalent of £1,566 today.



A handwritten letter on 20 December 1937 from E Irene Webber, living at Bakers Hall, Bures (Grade II listed today), requests that the company provides her with a five-day return monthly season ticket between Bures and Colchester each monthly basis until further notice. It says much about how the postal service has changed since then that the first ticket she was ordering was to be valid from that same day. "It may not be possible for me to collect the above at your office, so please hand it to the conductor on the 8.15 am bus to Colchester."

Official opening of Shillibeer House

Our new Droitwich centre, Shillibeer House, was officially opened on Saturday 31 May. This took the form of a buffet reception and a thank you to the main donors who contributed to our Building for the Future appeal, which raised over £300,000 towards the £1 million-plus project.

Thirty-eight donors saw the Donor Board unveiled by Omnibus Society president Bill Hiron at a local village hall followed by a trip on a preserved Midland Red S17 single-decker to inspect Shillibeer House and a small sample of the archive material held within.



The guests are assembled and listening intently as the speeches are made.



Mike Rogers of The National Archives says a few words of appreciation about The Bus Archive while BA archivist Elizabeth Shuck looks on.

Official opening of Shillibeer House



Bill Hiron (left) unveils the donor board with BA chairman Brian King. The Omnibus Society, of which Bill is 2025 president, donated an additional £250,000 to the project.



The Midland Red S17 brings guests to Shillibeer House.

Official opening of Shillibeer House



Elizabeth has a group lined up smartly while describing the construction of the storage pod.



David Astill, managing director of Nottingham City Transport and a great supporter of the archive, has a go at moving one of the racking stacks.



As well as a tour of the famous storage pod, there was some sample material from the collections for inspection.

Official opening of Shillibeer House



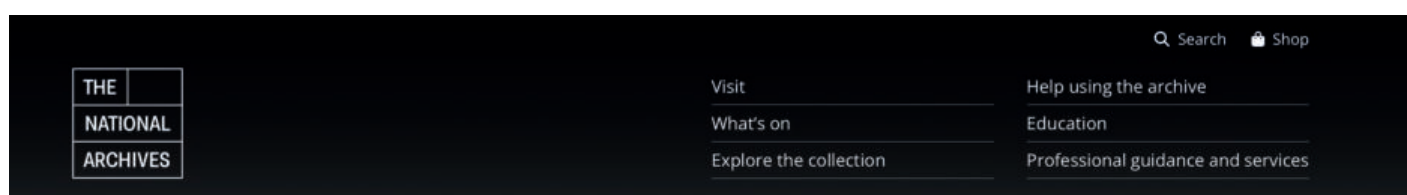
The longest serving volunteers from our two 'parents' Ted Gadsby (left) of The Omnibus Society and Paul Addenbrooke (right) of The Kithead Trust. Paul commented: "It is almost hard to believe what we started all those years ago has developed into a premier national archive. Great credit to all involved."

More recognition by The National Archives

The presence of The National Archive at our opening ceremony reflected the close and supportive interest it has been taking in us for several years

We are now featured on its website as a case study on business archives, and specifically how we secured funding and support for Shillibeer House.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/resources-by-archive-type/business-archives/case-studies/the-bus-archive/>



[Home](#) > [Archives sector](#) > [Advice and guidance](#) > [Resources by archive type](#) > [Business archives](#) > [Case studies](#) > The Bus Archive

The Bus Archive

Summary

The Bus Archive has a mission to collect and preserve records, photographs, publications and publicity from the road passenger transport industries — bus, coach, trolley-bus and tram — and make these freely available to the public for research and education.

The organisation in its current form dates from 2018 when the collections of two long-established community archives – [The Kithead Trust](#) and the [Omnibus Society](#) – were brought together. The re-branding to its current title and the addition of its strapline – the memory of the bus industry – has made a significant difference to its profile. It currently operates from three premises in Droitwich, Walsall and Acton.

The collections, which cover the period from Victorian times to today, provide an insight into the operating companies, manufacturers, and regulatory bodies as well as the papers of significant individuals. It contains an estimated two million images and the

[Also in Case studies](#)

[Bank of England](#)

[Barclays Group Archives](#)

[Boots](#)

[F & A Wates and London Metropolitan University](#)

[M&S Archive](#)

[Nationwide](#)

[The Sainsbury Archive](#)

[Unilever](#)

[Reckitt](#)

[Transport for London](#)

[West Sussex Record Office](#)

Donations

We have received the following donations in the last quarter. As ever, we are very grateful to everyone on this list:

John Edser	Book collection.
Richard Delahoy	Colour slide collection of John Rugg.
Geoff Lusher	Books, timetables and publicity, photographs, N.P.T.S.A. Minutes and correspondence; part of collection of Peter Davey.
John Mayo	Photograph collection.
Tony Peters	John Gillham road passenger photograph collection.
Alan Cross	Book collection.
John Seale	Collection of MCW Metrobus development material.
Gary Trotter	Records of OK Motor Services.
David Harman	Album of Bristol Omnibus sample tickets.
Guy Marriott	Digitised research records of the late Ian Read.
Ian Athey	Northern General material: Tours brochures, director visits brochures; Northern General Enthusiasts Club news sheets.
Darryl Meades	Timetables and published books.
Colin Kennington	Collection of the late Fred Kennington.
Allan Tomlins	Timetables and tickets.
Barry Turberfield	Slide collection of the late Jim Bozall; wallet of photos from the late Bob Gray; mixed collection from the late Rodney Barnes; fleet lists from the late David Thompson.
Peter Tonkin	Continental timetables and publicity.
Richard Dixon	Published magazines - Terminus Magazine.
Christine Baker	30 bus images.
Wayne Asher	Timetables and publicity.
Dudley's Coaches	Publicity items and tickets.
Roland Clausen-Thue	Published books, timetables and publicity.
Karl Kingston	Vehicle plans.
David A Jones	Mixed collection.
Bob Bonner	Collection of the late Geoffrey Bottomley, original Rochdale vehicle taxation records and analysis.
Richard Hunt	Guy Arab V sales brochure, a 1962 ECW drawing and two 1970s waybills.
Mrs Pat Jones	Mixed collection of the late Ashley Jones.
Terry Bowker	Almex ticket canceller; Almex model A ticket machine; Saver Strip display; ties and cufflinks; West Yorkshire PTE sign for visually impaired.

Remember if you have any surplus material – whether it be official records, your own research, publicity or photographs – we would like to hear from you at hello@busarchive.org.uk. If we don't have a particular item, it will be added to our collections, and if we do already have it then we can sell the surplus one to fund our charity.

A vintage red and cream-colored bus, possibly a Leyland or similar model from the mid-20th century, is parked on a city street. The bus features a large front grille with multiple headlights, a destination sign on top, and a side window with the number '101' visible. The background shows a multi-story building with numerous windows and a sign that reads 'HOTEL'.

[illegible]

We also received a batch of original Rochdale registration documents, including this application to renew the motor taxation on a black Wolseley registered CDK 415.

B.	PARTICULARS OF VEHICLE	ANSWER HERE
(a)	Index Mark and Number.....	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">CDK 4 15</div>
(a)	Taxation Class	PRIVATE
(a)	Make	WOLSELEY
(a)	Colour	BLACK
(Sign the above particulars from your registration book or old licence)		
(f)	What alterations, if any, have been made affecting the registration particulars since last declaration? (see Note 4 on page 1 of registration book)	
(f)	Date of expiry of old licence.....	31 DECEMBER 1951
(f)	Where vehicle is ordinarily kept.....	27 WILFRED ST. ROCHDALE
C. DECLARATION		
<p>I DECLARE my answers to the above questions to be correct in every respect and +I FURTHER DECLARE that the vehicle has not been, and will not be, used between the date of expiration of the last licence and the date of commencement of the licence for which application is now made.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">(This further declaration should not be made and should be deleted if the application is for a licence for a period immediately following the period covered by the last licence.)</p>		
<p><small>Except in the case of a limited liability company or limited partnership, the following declaration must be signed by the person who made the previous full Declaration.</small></p> <p><small>In the case of a limited liability company, the Managing Director or the Secretary, or the name of a director, must be signed by one of the partners.</small></p> <p><small>If it is signed by an agent or attorney, the full name and address of both the agent or attorney, and the person who signed or attested, must be inserted.</small></p>		<p>Usual Signature <u>Bradley</u></p> <p>Name (in full) <u>BRIAN BRADLEY</u> <small>(State whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss)</small></p> <p>Address <u>27 WILFRED ST</u> <u>ROCHDALE</u></p> <p>Date <u>14 Jan</u> 1952</p>

The first Atlanteans for Western Welsh

While Aldershot & District's trial of Leyland's LFDD prototype (see Front Cover) led that BET company to buy no rear-engined double-deckers or Leylands, some of its sister companies were quick to embrace Leyland's revolutionary Atlantean when it went into production from 1958.

One of those early converts was Western Welsh, which bought 66 with low height Weymann bodies between 1960 and 1962 before reverting to front-engined designs for the next few years. The first 31 were delivered in 1960 and the launch of the first of them at Porthcawl on 8 January that year is the subject of a scrapbook of press cuttings that the company collected.

The photograph accompanying the report in the *Western Mail* the following morning shows that they were among the last new vehicles in a red and yellow livery soon superseded by allover red. The story reveals that these 31 "new-look modern service buses" cost £180,000 to buy — equivalent of £3.6 million today — and cost more to run than "the old type", with fuel consumption of 9 mpg compared with 11.5 mpg, although they had seats for nine more passengers.

That reporter was bowled over by what he experienced, declaring that it was "a very nice way to travel". "The 125 hp engine is so placed that it cuts out vibration and noise. There is more room at the front and the driver is level with the automatically operating doors, which he alone controls."



A later picture of one of Western Welsh's first 31 Atlantean's, 311 (TUH 311). (Photographer Roy Marshall, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. MGB (98))

WESTERN MAIL, SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 1960



Latest addition to the Western Welsh Omnibus Company's fleet is the Leyland "Atlantean," a 70-seater double-deck vehicle of revolutionary design. The engine is placed transversely at the rear of the vehicle to eliminate noise. Thirty-one of these vehicles have been ordered by the company, and a number will be in service by the end of January. Pressmen went on a trial run from Cardiff to Porthcawl yesterday.

New-look buses go into service

WESTERN MAIL REPORTER

PASSENGERS on some Western Welsh buses will be having smoother, quieter and safer journeys in 1960—thanks to a £180,000 purchase of 31 modern service buses being introduced this month on South Wales roads.

On a few routes the revolutionary buses — they have engines in the back — can already be seen. But generally they will not all be in service until the end of January.

Yesterday I drove in one of them on a demonstration trip to Porthcawl and back.

And my verdict: A very nice way to travel.

The 125 h.p. engine is so placed that it cuts out vibration and noise. There is more room at the front, and the driver is level with the automatically operating doors, which he alone controls.

'She's a beauty'

"The driver has a complete view of passengers getting on or off, and it will save the time of the conductor who previously operated the doors and collected fares," said the general manager, Mr. T. G. Davies.

The driver, Mr. Bill Rees, of Broad Street, Canton, Cardiff, pulled the 30ft-long gleaming bus to a halt on Porthcawl's sea front. He said: "She's a beauty. A child could drive her."

The new fleet all have automatic gear selection, with two-pedal control and no clutch.

The big double-deckers cost more to run than the old type, doing only nine miles to the gallon compared to 11½ miles.

They seat 70, compared with the average of 61 in older types.

"The driver has a complete view of passengers getting on or off, and it will save the time of the conductor who previously operated the doors and collected the fares," says the general manager, Mr T G Davies.

The driver at the launch, one Bill Rees of Canton, Cardiff, was equally impressed, telling the reporter, "She's a beauty. A child could drive her."

The industrial reporter for the South Wales Argus was impressed by the wide gangways and the enhanced safety of the enclosed front platform and clearly also enjoyed the ride from Cardiff to Porthcawl. "The run was smooth and despite fog was completed in an hour."

VEHICLE DEMONSTRATION

and

PRESS CONFERENCE

at

PORTHCAWL

—

Friday 8th January, 1960

—

WESTERN WELSH
OMNIBUS COMPANY LIMITED

SOUTH WALES ARGUS

January 8, 1960

New type buses on Gwent roads

By the South Wales Argus Industrial Reporter

THE first of a fleet of revolutionary new double deck buses will soon be seen on the roads in Monmouthshire.

Thirty-one Leyland "Atlantean" seventy-seaters have been ordered by the Western Welsh.

A number will be in service by the end of January. Some will be based at the Cross Keys depot.

The vehicles are thirty feet long, eight feet wide, and 13 feet four inches high. The gangways are wide, and there are 34 seats in the lower, and 36 in the upper saloons.

The engine is at the rear of the bus, which makes way for a low, wide entrance at the front, enclosed by power doors under the control of the driver, who sits alongside the platform.

Safety factor

This is not only a substantial safety factor — passengers cannot leave or board the bus when it is on the move—but it also relieves the conductor of platform duties, and allows him to concentrate on the collection of fares.

On Friday morning, a party of South Wales Pressmen made a demonstration journey on one of the buses to Porthcawl. The run was smooth, and despite fog was completed from Cardiff in an hour.

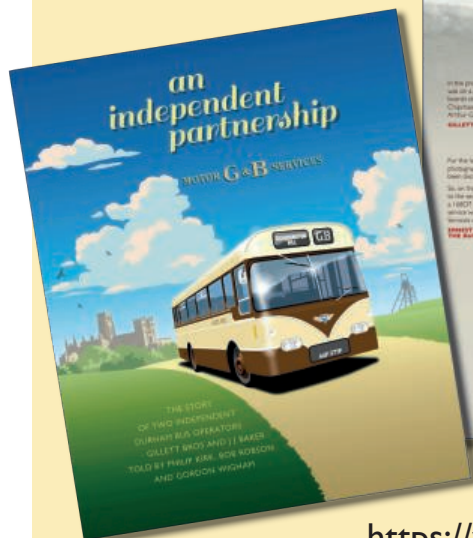
When Cwmbran new town is further developed, it may be possible to run double-deck buses like these from Newport to Pontypool.

At present, only single-deck buses can be used because of low bridges on the road.

The wording of the story also reveals how the gender balance in working life has changed over the past 65 years. That demonstration journey was attended by "a party of south Wales pressmen" and the driver-controlled doors relieved the conductor of platform duties "and allows him to concentrate on the collection of fares".

'An independent partnership'

- the fascinating story of G&B Motor Services of Co. Durham



Available exclusively from Classic Bus Publishing:
<https://www.classicbusmag.co.uk/books/an-independent-partnership>



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