

JUDD. Denis Allen

Banbury Road Garage, BYFIELD

Denis Allen Judd was born on 25th June 1911 at Little Houghton, the village in which his father was a Police Sergeant. By the time Denis left school in 1925, at the age of fourteen, the family had moved to the Police Station at Weedon, so Denis started work at the Weedon Ordnance Depot as an apprentice mechanic. Here, under the guidance of a skilled engineer, he worked on the Store's Police personnel and Officers cars, gaining first-hand knowledge of vehicle mechanics.

The Judd family moved to Byfield in 1926, so Denis was unable to complete his apprenticeship and instead started work at the local garage in Banbury Road, Byfield that he was eventually to purchase. 1926 was the year of the General Strike and the garage at which Denis Judd was working fell on hard times and these circumstances were to cause Denis to leave and start a business of his own. To make sure he had a regular income, Denis Judd took an early morning job as a part-time postman, starting very early each morning and finishing by about 9am. This employment earned Denis a weekly income of 10/6d (52.5p).

Near to the house that the Judd family occupied was an old wheelwright's shop situated at the five cross roads in the village of Byfield and it was this building that Denis rented for 2/6d (12.5p) per week and in which he undertook cycle repairs. A feature of the former wheelwright's shop was an inglenook fireplace which, in the winter months, proved to be a very warm and attractive spot. From the mid 1920s there was much unemployment and a number of the unemployed lads in Byfield used to gather at Denis Judd's workshop and assist with the repair and delivery of cycles in return for the warmth and comfort of the fire which graced the attractive fireplace. Repairs to bicycles developed into repairs to motor cycles and over the years, to repairs to motorcars. Thus, by default, Denis Judd found he had unwittingly become a motor vehicle repairer without having any particular wish or ambition to develop a career in this direction.

By about 1929 the old wheelwright's shop had become inadequate for Denis's requirements so he rented some converted stables at the Rose & Crown PH yard at Byfield to provide more spacious premises. Whilst there, a station wagon was bought which seated nine passengers and this was let for hire. Over the course of the next six or seven years several limousines were acquired for hire purposes.

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Denis Judd's site at the Rose & Crown, Byfield with a collection of four of his hire cars. The photograph was taken in the early 1930s.

In the pre-War period, a number of schools in the villages in the very rural area surrounding Byfield were being closed due to falling attendances. Because of the small numbers of children involved, Denis Judd was awarded several contracts to transport displaced children by limousine to the nearest educational establishments remaining open.

In 1937 Denis Judd took three momentous steps forward. The first was to marry Joan Shrimpton from nearby Woodford Halse. The second was to buy his own garage premises in Banbury Road, Byfield which was the one he had worked in earlier as a young man and which he was to occupy for the rest of his business career. The garage in question had formerly been a motor garage but the business had been abandoned prior to Denis Judd acquiring the property and starting afresh. The third major decision was to purchase a second-hand Bedford WLB coach registered HG 3147, with 20 seat body, possibly by Thurgood, and this is how Denis Judd came to be one of Northamptonshire's coach operators. The second-hand Bedford coach was bought from a London dealer in Tottenham Court Road and the reason Denis Judd acquired it was to consolidate the various school contract trips that he was operating with several large saloon cars, to enable more economical operation to be accomplished. Most of the journeys operated were in the Charwelton, Hellidon, and Preston Capes areas to schools at Woodford Halse.

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A rear view of Bedford WLB - HG 3147 - standing in Denis Judd's garage. The ladies standing at the front are Denis's wife and aunt.

Just before the War another pair of twenty-seater Bedford coaches were purchased for school work and during the War Denis had to acquire a further ten or eleven second-hand coaches to satisfy local demands to convey building and construction workers from the Byfield hinterland to Chipping Warden for the construction of the aerodrome there. Also workers had to be conveyed to such factories as Stead & Stimpson and Rex Arnold at Daventry or to the Aluminium Works at Banbury on a daily three-shift basis. A further valuable source of work during the War was the transportation of firstly Italian, secondly German Prisoners-of-War and thirdly displaced persons from a camp that had been established at Boddington Road, Byfield to various sites around the area. Gangs of men were dropped off in the mornings at farms around the district for ditching, harvesting and other farm work and picked up again later in the day. An ammunition dump and complex was built during the War at Barby and construction teams were conveyed by Judd's Coaches to this site also. Denis Judd's Wartime contracts greatly benefited his business and by the time the hostilities had ceased, the fleet comprised about fourteen vehicles - all of Bedford manufacture and about which no details have come to light.

Towards the end of the War Denis Judd ventured into the coal distribution business by the acquisition of the firm of A Russell of Byfield together with three coal lorries, which he used to deliver coal off-loaded by the Railway at Byfield and Woodford Halse, to all the surrounding villages. In fact the existing coal firm run by Jack Shrimpton (Denis Judd's brother-in-law) of Woodford Halse was soon taken over to consolidate this enterprise.

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Furthermore the original business of motor vehicle repair and fuel and oil sales continued from the Banbury Road premises. The coal delivery business continued until 1972 when labour difficulties led Denis Judd to pass the business to Messrs. Lamprey of Banbury after one of Mr Judd's employees started his own business in competition and the other lorry drivers left.

The coach vehicles acquired pre-War were painted in a livery of two shades of blue but all those taken into stock during the War were either camouflaged or painted in a dark green colour. In the post-War period cream and red were adopted as the fleet colours until the late 1950s when the Daventry based Taylor's KW Services changed their colours to cream and red. At this point Judd's Coaches adopted light blue and red for its fleet colours.

Three Bedford WLB buses were acquired in 1946 from United Counties for £250 the lot. These vehicles had been used for home guard duties during the war and lacked seats, so Denis Judd had to re-equip them before he could run these buses. Thereafter they proved to be extremely good vehicles. Two were 1932 models registered NV 1491 and NV 1916 and both had Grose bodies which had originally seated 20 passengers. The third Bedford WLB dated from 1933, had a Duple body, and was registered NV 2893. In the post-War period the run of Bedford vehicles was broken by the arrival of a Dennis which was acquired from the Military Authorities at Sheffield. With the demise of Prisoner of War transport and other War-related work, Denis Judd was able to take on additional school contracts and was also fortunate in retaining all his Works contracts.



A line-up of Judd's post-War fleet, amongst which can be seen Bedford WLB - NV 2893 - on the right, Bedford WTB - DOF 195 in the centre and Bedford WLB - NV 1491 to the left.

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Denis Judd's Bedford WLB - NV 1491 - being shovelled clear of the snow during the 1947 winter.

No stage-carriage or excursion and tours licences were ever held by Denis Judd but he did acquire a number of express service licences for the operation of Works services. In the Spring of 1957 a licence to operate from Woodford Halse via Byfield, Charwelton and Badby to the Daventry British Timken factory was granted. On Works services of this nature only employees of the hiring factory could normally be carried and in addition to the British Timken contract the same was true for journeys operated from Woodford Halse via Byfield, Charwelton, Badby, Newnham and Staverton to Stead & Stimpson's Factory in Daventry, granted to Denis Judd on an express licence in the Spring of 1960. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s many of Denis Judd's coaches were hired to United Counties at weekends and holiday periods following that Company's expansion of long-distance services resulting from an exploitation of the travel opportunities which emanated from the opening of the M1 Motorway in 1959.

Returning to the subject of coaches, in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, Denis Judd replaced his fleet with second-hand Bedfords, the majority being OBs, but he did buy an Austin CXD and a Dennis Lancet. Most of the coaches were getting on in years when Denis bought them and he then ran them on contract services until they were no longer worth repairing. During the 1960s Denis Judd remained faithful to the Bedford marque except when he tried a couple of Ford chassis. His work for United Counties required some better coaches and in July 1961 YRP 627 was registered new to Dennis Judd. He gradually acquired a handful of presentable forty-one seat coaches which were always well turned out and mechanically reliable.

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FON 858 was a Bedford OWB which carried 27 seat N.W.B.M.W. bodywork and is seen alongside Bedford OB registered JHA 264. (Photo courtesy R Marshall)



Photographed on the same occasion as the picture above was Bedford OB - JHA 264 - with Burlingham twenty-nine seat coachwork. The vehicle on the right was Bedford SB - HMR 70 with Mulliner bodywork. (Photo courtesy R Marshall).

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In 1959 Denis Judd bought this Bedford SB coach registered EWH 862. It carried a thirty-three seat Duple Vega body. (Photograph courtesy R H G Simpson)



The only coach ever bought new by Denis Judd was YRP 627, an ex-demonstration Ford 570E with Duple Yeoman bodywork. This vehicle frequently duplicated United Counties express services in the 1960s. Bedford SB1 - GUP 315 - with Duple Super Vega coachwork joined the Judd fleet in 1964. (Photo courtesy M Knight)

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A front view of the decorative Duple Vega bodied Bedford SB registered LNM 500 that Denis Judd operated in the mid 1960s.



A Plaxton Embassy body was fitted to Ford 570E - 774 CYW - and when this picture was taken it was showing "United Counties" on its destination blind.

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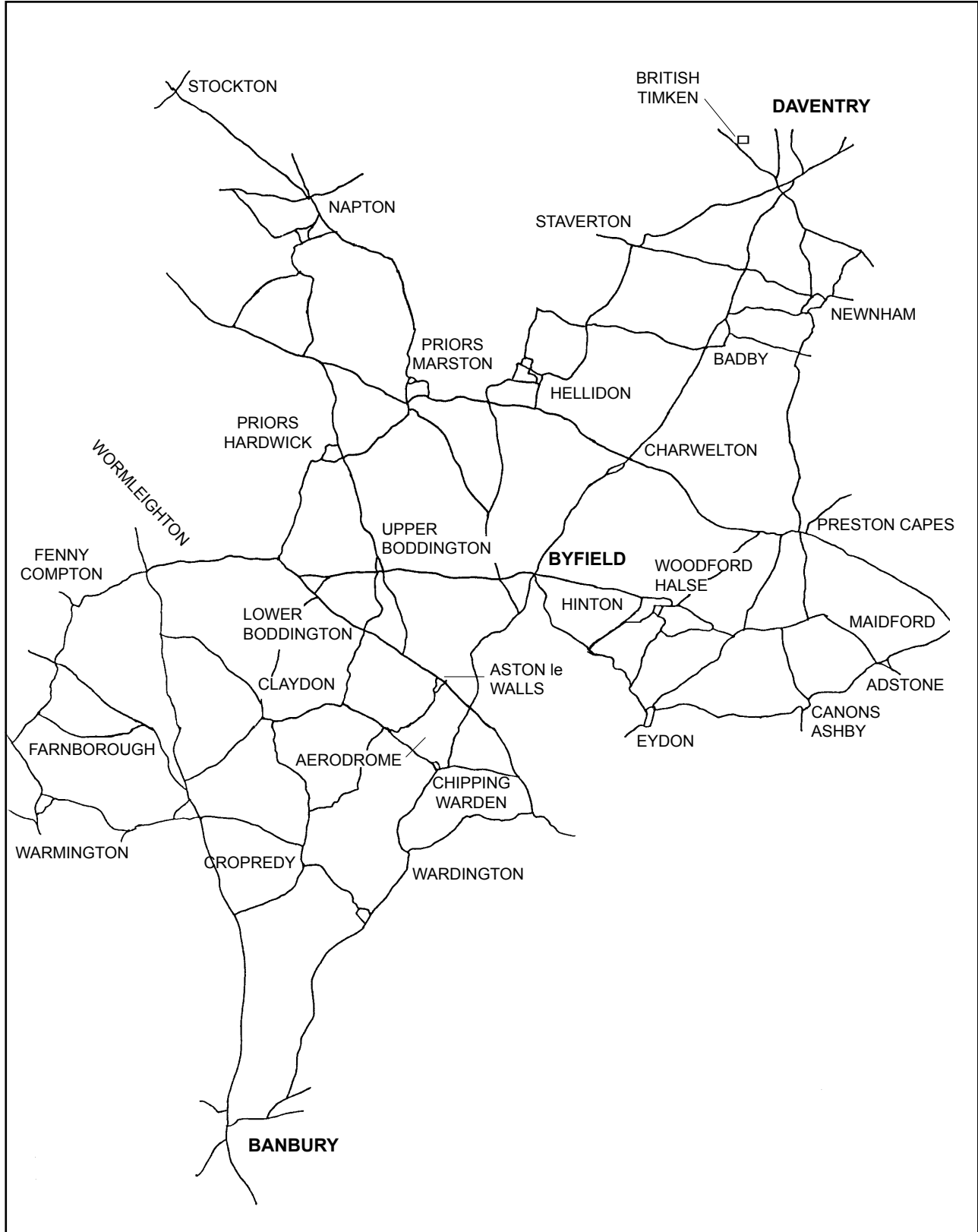
Denis Judd always favoured Bedford coaches and SB1 model - GEF 416 - was another Duple Vega bodied example. (Photo courtesy M Knight)

Denis Judd's largest single contract was for the supply of coaches to take workers to and from Export Packing Services Ltd at Chipping Warden. Export Packing was involved in an extensive operation to package, crate and export motor vehicles and accessories. In March 1963 Denis Judd applied to the Traffic Commissioners for six Express Service licences to convey workers on an assisted travel scheme from a wide range of villages in the area. The starting points of the coaches were Daventry, Adstone, Woodford Halse, Eydon, Stockton and Cropredy and seven vehicles were committed to this operation. Education and other Works contracts, together with private hire, formed the remainder of Denis Judd's business.

By the 1970s, contractors and hirers were requiring larger vehicles which meant that Denis Judd either had to spend a considerable sum to update his fleet or sell the business as a going concern. Upon reaching the age of sixty-two, he decided he had operated coaches for long enough and, as neither his son Denis nor daughter Susan, were interested in taking over the business, the coach side of the firm was sold to one of its part-time drivers - David Adkins - of nearby Upper Boddington, in September 1973. At this time the fleet comprised ten coaches. David Adkins was a farmer and landowner who was so keen on coaches that he drove part-time for Denis Judd, almost as a hobby. Denis Judd finally retired from his remaining garage business at the age of 63 in April 1974 and disposed of the business to new operators who continued to trade as "Judd's Garage".

I am greatly indebted to Denis Judd for his valuable assistance in compiling this paper.

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Map of the area in which Denis Judd's contract services operated.

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STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	HG3147	Bedford	WLB	109926	Thurgood?	C20F		12/34	-/37	?	London Dealer		
	?	Bedford				20		?	-/39	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	-/39	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	?	Bedford				20		?	?	?		1	
	NV 1491	Bedford	WLB	108611	Grose	B20F	-	6/32	-/46	12/53	United Counties (400)		
	NV 1916	Bedford	WLB	108706	Grose	B20F	-	12/32	-/46	12/50	United Counties (416)		
	NV 2893	Bedford	WLB	109198	Duple	B20F	3917	8/33	-/46	2/53	United Counties (513)		
		Dennis							-/46		War Department		
	Possibly other vehicles acquired between 1947 and 1949.												
	DOF 195	Bedford	WTB	111435	Burlingham	C26F		6/37	c-/49	c-/57	Johnson, Rushden		
	VV 5101	Bedford	WTB	110623	Grose	C26F	-	7/36	-/49		United Counties (514)		
	JOR 542	Austin	CXD	178167	Whitson	FC30F			1/52	6/65			
3	ERY 722	Bedford	OB	49358	Duple Vista	C29F	43957	5/47	12/53	8/58	/Walton, Tadcaster /Mason, Leicester	/Terson, London N3	

Notes: 1 - Twelve or thirteen second-hand Bedford vehicles acquired during the War, many being supplied by Yeates of Loughborough.

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	BCK 190	Bedford	OB	40380	Duple Vista	C29F		1/47	4/55	by-/58	Errington, Evington/ Eaglen, Gainsborough	Banbury Buildings, Banbury	
	ENR 428	Bedford	OB	73920	Mulliner	B31F		4/48	9/55	by5/58	Errington, Evington/ Allen, Mountsorrel	/Jelson, Leicester	
18	FON 858	Bedford	OWB	12332	N.W.B.M.W. (1950)	C27F		3/43	by5/56	by-/62	Errington, Evington/ Myatt, Birmingham	/Boothville Y.C., N'pton	1
9	EBC 909	Bedford	OB	39487	Duple Vista	C29F	43255	1/47	by5/56	12/63		/Provincial, Leicester	
10	HMR 70	Bedford	SB	2730	Mulliner	B36F		-/51	?	3/60		/Mid Wales, Newtown	
	JHA 264	Bedford	OB	22792	Burlingham	C29F		10/46	by2/57	by5/58			
	CTL 652	Dennis	Lancet	33535	Yeates	C35F		3/48	10/57	12/57	/Francis, Tyseley		
	FAY 980	Bedford	OB	100183	Duple V	C29F		3/49	8/58	-/63	/Moore, Sleaford	/Jarvis, Middle Barton	
12	HYE 552	Bedford	OB	39819	Duple Vista	C29F		-/47	by-/59	by4/63	/Deacon & Hardy, Barlestone	/Mobile Shop	
14	KPP 706	Bedford	OB	69705	Duple Vista	C29F		2/48	by1/59	-/65	/United Service	/Mobile Shop	
	EWB 862	Bedford	SB	7255	Duple Vega	C33F	1009/81	3/52	9/59	1/67	/Soul, Olney Binns, Bolton/ Kenyon, Bolton		
	HFR 858	Bedford	SBG	29658	Plaxton Venturer	C38F	2296	7/54	9/59	3/68			
	EX 7120	Bedford	SB	1853	Plaxton Venturer	C33F		6/51	2/60	12/63	/Simonds, Botesdale		
	KGV 599	Bedford	SBG	49597	Duple Vega	C41F	1074/66	5/57	3/60	7/69	/Yaxley & Sayers, Yarmouth	Broken Up	
	DJP 56	Bedford	SB3	59079	Duple Vega	C41F	1090/12	2/58	8/60	9/73	/Thurston, Withersfield	D Adkins, U.Boddington	
	YRP 627	Ford	570E	510E66298	Duple Yeoman	C41F	1139/359	7/61	-	9/73	/Liptrot, Platt Bridge Yeates, Loughborough/ Ford Demonstration vehicle	D Adkins, U.Boddington	
	LPU 627	Bedford	OB	57757	Duple Vista	C29F	47669	-/47	6/62	12/65			
	NAD 640	Bedford	SBG	25085	Duple Vega	C35F	1032/30	10/53	6/62	5/67	/Petch, Hopton		
	PTC 880	Bedford	SB	15496	Duple Vega	C37F	1031/22	3/53	8/63	3/67	/Harvey, Chedworth	/Mobile Shop, Mansfield	
	LNM 500	Bedford	SB	11907	Duple Vega	C35F	1031/1	4/53	9/63	8/69	/Orsborn, Wollaston		
	NAR 450	Bedford	SB	4142	Duple Vega	C33F	1006/277	8/51	9/63	5/70	/Trott, Nottingham		
	315 GUP	Bedford	SB1	79166	Duple Vega	C41F	1120/333	4/60	2/64	12/72	/Don, Dunmow		
	774 CYW	Ford	570E	510E76724	Plaxton Embassy 1	C41F	612765	11/61	5/64	9/73	/Cosy, Meadowfield	D Adkins, Upper Boddington	
	GEF 416	Bedford	SB1	69669	Duple Vega	C41F	1105/403	5/59	10/65	9/73	/Whitehall, London N7	D Adkins, Upper Boddington	
	LNK 488	Bedford	SB	2374	Gurney Nutting	C33F		-/51	6/66	8/66	/Roberts, Wingate		
											/Hewitt, Anasley		

Notes: Where fleet numbers are shown, these were used by the previous owners and remained on the vehicles whilst in Judd's ownership.
1 - Body new 1950.

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		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
XNB 16	Bedford	SB1	69696	Duple Vega	C41F	1105/258	9/59	5/67	9/73	/Adams, Handley	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
WCE 530	Bedford	SB1	81239	Duple Vega	C41F	1120/467	5/60	9/67	8/73	/Skey, Sywell			
RHL 178	Bedford	SB1	73579	Duple Vega	C41F	1120/71	4/60	7/68	6/72	/Spiller, Peasedown			
706 RDH	Bedford	SB5	89053	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1145/185	1/62	9/68	9/73	/Camplin, Donington	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
298 BLB	Bedford	SB1	87185	Duple Vega	C41F	1133/331	2/61	2/70	9/73	/Cook, Braintree	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
TUD 67	Bedford	SB1	87186	Duple Vega	C41F	1133/508	6/61	8/70	9/73	/Grayline, Bicester	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
TUD 65	Bedford	SB1	87251	Duple Vega	C41F	1133/494	6/61	9/70	9/73	/Grayline, Bicester	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
EBF 218	Bedford	SB1	86820	Duple Vega	C41F	1133/303	1/61	9/70	12/72	/Churchbridge, Cannock	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
FFE 353E	Ford	Transit	BC05GE 41544	Martin Walter	12	-	7/67	1/71	9/73	/Simonds, Botesdale	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
6801 HA	Bedford	SB5	91977	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1159/306	4/63	4/71	9/73	/Mann, Smethwick	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		
YRV 303	Bedford	SB5	89546	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1145/240	2/62	8/72	9/73	/Shaw, Dobcross	D Adkins, Upper Boddington		

Notes: Most vehicles purchased through Errington of Evington or Yeates of Loughborough.