

## JEFFS' COACHES

**Roland John (Jack) Jeffs**

**John Victor Jeffs**

**Rose Cottage, later Station Yard**

**HELMDON**

This is the story of the Jeffs family's operation of coaches which started almost accidentally with one vehicle in 1958 and developed into a 100 plus road passenger transport operation by the early 1990s, before rationalisation during the following decade. Because of the resulting size of the fleet and acquisitions made, it will be necessary to produce this history in a number of parts.

The founder of Jeffs' Coaches was Roland John Jeffs - always known as Jack - who was born in Bugbrooke on 27th June 1908. Jack was mostly engaged in agricultural work but before the War worked part-time for Sam Walters who was Helmdon's local bus operator - see paper NN-WA6. In fact Jack was first licensed to drive PSVs from 3rd April 1933. Jack Jeffs was exempted from War service as the work he did repairing and servicing agricultural machinery was considered essential to the war effort. Long before this time Jack married his lifelong Bugbrooke sweetheart Eileen Gilkes and the couple had two sons, the elder being Kenneth Roland born on 23rd June 1932 and the younger being John Victor who was born on 28th February 1936. Both sons eventually feature prominently in this story.

As mentioned previously, Jack Jeffs drove buses and coaches for Sam Walters on a part-time basis but after the War he was employed full-time and became Walters' leading driver. Sam Walters had no heirs to take over his business when he retired and it seems there was a gentlemen's agreement that Jack Jeffs would be given the first option to purchase the business at the appropriate time. However, that was not to happen and the story goes that Sam Walters' wife did not always see eye to eye with Jack Jeffs and influenced her husband to sell the business to another purchaser. Accordingly, one Saturday in 1958, when Jack Jeffs returned with his coach from the seaside, Sam Walters' wife announced to Jack that the business had been sold to Harry Webster of Pattishall with effect from 1st June 1958 and henceforth he had a new employer.

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Jack Jeffs' reaction to this news is not difficult to imagine and he resigned from his existing employment and set about seeking a coach with which to start his own operation. Jack was fortunate in being awarded a contract to convey workers of the True Form shoe company from their homes in Helmdon and Greatworth to the factory in Brackley. He also secured a school contract to take pupils from Radstone and Whitfield to Brackley. These two contracts provided regular income which was supplemented by private hires to the seaside and theatre trips to Coventry and Oxford. As Sam Walters' former leading driver, local hirers knew and wanted Jack Jeffs to convey their parties and so the private hire work came to Jack without much effort on his part.

The coach Jack Jeffs sourced in June 1958 was a five-year-old thirty-seven seater Bedford SB carrying Duple Vega bodywork and registered MDD 688. It is alleged that this vehicle cost £2,350 and that Jack secured it with a £20 deposit.



*The Bedford SB registered MDD 688 had more chrome decoration around its radiator than many Duple Vega coaches, which perhaps improved its appearance. Note the name "R. J. Jeffs" in the offside destination aperture as, to begin with, Jack Jeffs was a sole trader.*

It soon became apparent to Jack Jeffs that a second coach was required to allow for maintenance and breakdowns whilst at the same time giving more flexibility for private

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hire work at weekends. For this purpose a War-time Bedford OWB chassis was acquired onto which a replacement Duple Vista body had been placed in 1949 whilst with Buckby's Coaches of Rothwell. Jack Jeffs bought this twenty-nine seater in November 1958 and David Brookhouse of Helmdon drove this machine on a part-time basis as needed. David had his own business which enabled him to be quite flexible with regard to hours of work.



*Jack Jeffs' second coach, acquired in November 1958, was a Duple Vista bodied Bedford OWB registered CBD 101 and it is seen here whilst still with its previous owner, Leslie Adams of Rothwell trading as Buckby's Coaches.*

David Brookhouse recalls that:- "The business started to grow when Jack purchased his second coach in November 1958. Jack at this time was in the habit of cleaning his bus outside his house in Church Street with the help of his wife Eileen, Cyril Barrett and me. This was usually around midnight and on completion Jack would inspect the cleanliness of the windows with the aid of a paraffin hurricane lantern. From the earliest times Jack was very particular about maintaining a very high standard of cleanliness and roadworthiness in his vehicles and they were serviced to a high standard. If necessary, this meant working well into the night." David remembers coming in from a trip at midnight to be met by Jack saying a coach needed a new clutch - it wouldn't take long and they would do it straight away. As is often the case, things did not go according to plan and the job wasn't completed until 4 am. Jack and David then had to take coach trips out for the day at 6 am!

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Jack Jeffs first applied to the East Midland Traffic Commissioners in February 1961 for three Express Service licences for Assisted Travel Schemes for routes to run from Kings Sutton Walnut Tree, Brackley Greyhound and Helmdon to Bicester C.O.D. - (Central Ordnance Depot) - on Mondays to Fridays. Assisted Travel Schemes were those where the vehicles were hired and paid for as a whole, by Bicester C.O.D. in these cases, and approved fares were deducted from employees' wages. The three licences were duly granted under references TER 5208/1-3.

The youngest son of Jack and Eileen Jeffs - John Victor - had undertaken an engineering apprenticeship with the Daimler Company after which he worked for Self-Changing Gears Ltd at Coventry. From the start of Jack's venture, John assisted his father by driving part-time and at weekends. In February 1961, Jack and John entered a 50/50 partnership agreement to run the coach business and at this time John took the bold step of abandoning his former career and, at the same time, a third coach was acquired for the Jeffs' fleet. The chosen vehicle was an A.E.C. Regal III registered DJR 343 carrying a thirty-three seat Burlingham body. Unfortunately a photograph of this coach has not come to light.

The Jeffs family originally lived in a Council house in Church Street, Helmdon, but had moved to Rose Cottage, also situated in Church Street, by the time Jack started trading on his own account. At this time vehicles were parked in a rented barn at the junction of Cross Lane with Wappenham Road. In the Autumn of 1959 Jack rented the former Stratford-Upon-Avon & Midland Junction Railway's Helmdon station yard, purchasing this from British Rail in 1964. When moving into the new site, the first job was to knock down the rear wall of the station building to enable two coaches to be parked partially under cover. The old goods shed, which still remains on the site (in 2009), was used as a workshop, which could accommodate only one vehicle at a time. The old cattle loading bay alongside the goods shed was dug out to form a pit which was used for many years, sometimes with difficulty, continuing until a new garage was erected. A general view of the station area as it was in 1951 is depicted on the next page, with vehicular access just to the right of the picture.

Jack Jeffs, being in his fifties, would have been quite happy to operate just a few coaches but, now in partnership with his son John, the operation was about to increase. John Jeffs was still in his twenties, was ambitious and possessed the necessary drive to propel the business forward. In the next eighteen months or so, he bought another four secondhand coaches and a minibus. The conventional coaches comprised three Bedford SBs and an A.E.C. Regal III, the latter being mounted with a Duple A-type body and the three Bedfords with Duple Vega coachwork. The registration numbers of the Bedfords were TBU 52, RWD 829 and WAT 100, whilst the Regal was HDG 473. One of the four coaches replaced Jeffs' original Bedford registered MDD 688. The minibus - FP 8418 - was a Morris J2 with eleven-seat Kenex bodywork.

Jeffs' Coaches next application to the Traffic Commissioners was made in November 1962, by which time both Jack and John were proprietors of the business. In consequence

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*A view of Helmdon Station in 1951. The goods shed at the far end of the platform is still in situ. The main station building was accessed from the far side to provide partial cover for two coaches.*



*Photographed at Helmdon Station yard was the Bedford SB3 registered TBU 52, with forty-one seat Duple Vega coachwork.*

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*A rear view of TBU 52, new in 1959, photographed at the same time in 1961 as the previous picture.*



*WAT 100 was two years older than TBU 52 and carried a "butterfly" style Duple Vega body seating 41 passengers. On this occasion when photographed a year or two after acquisition, it had worked the stage-carriage service from Helmdon to the Mayorhold, Northampton. (Photo courtesy M Knight).*

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*This rear view of Bedford SBG - WAT 100 - when compared with the aft of TBU 52, shows the very different styling of 1957 and 1959 Duple Vega coaches.*



*Jeffs' Coaches operated only three half-cab coaches and in this illustration the Duple A-type body of HDG 473 can be seen on an A.E.C. Regal chassis, with Jack Jeffs (centre) taking a well-earned rest whilst the coach was on layover at its destination.*

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the Commissioners' reference for this operator was changed to TER 5355. The applications in question were to take over the Excursions & Tours and Stage-carriage Licences in the Wappenham area previously granted to E & E Johnson of Hanslope and, before that, to W R Lawrence of Wappenham. Walter Lawrence had been a long-established operator - (see paper NN-LA9 for details). Lawrence was friendly with the Johnsons and when the former became ill, Ted Johnson drove for Lawrence and eventually purchased the business in 1961. Being based at Hanslope, the Wappenham operations were not very convenient for the Johnsons to administer and consequently, they in turn sold the Goodwill of the various licences to Jack and John Jeffs in 1963.

The services applied for by Jeffs' Coaches were:-

TER 5355/1 - Excursions and Tours from Wappenham.

TER 5355/2 - Stage - Weston-by-Weedon to Northampton, Plough Hotel -  
Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

TER 5355/3 - Stage - Towcester Square to Banbury Town Hall - Thursdays.

The three licences were duly granted and Jeffs' Coaches took over the operation from 1st March 1963.

Jeffs' three Express Service licences for Bicester C.O.D. were due for renewal in February 1963 and the Kings Sutton route was amended to start from Charlton, leaving at 6.30am and returning from Bicester at 4.36pm. The coaches starting from Brackley and Helmdon were unchanged.

In April 1963 Jeffs' applied to the Traffic Commissioners for an Excursions & Tours licence starting from Helmdon and picking up at Abthorpe, Wappenham, Lois Weedon, Weston and Brackley. Tours applied for included 2 or 3 days to Blackpool; coastal day trips to Brighton, Bournemouth, Portsmouth & Southsea, Skegness, Southend and Weymouth; day tours to Wye Valley, Thames Valley, Wembley and London for shopping, theatres etc. An objection was lodged by Brackley operator M R D Crookston and the Commissioners made various amendments prior to granting the licence.

Contracts to convey children from home to school featured prominently in Jeffs' Coaches portfolio of work and with Helmdon being situated in Northants but close to the borders with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, there was no shortage of opportunities to secure school contracts.

In order to attract new business, Jack and John Jeffs decided to purchase three new vehicles for the 1963 season. The first to arrive, in February 1963, was a Martin Walter bodied twelve-seater Ford minibus which took the registration 727 DBD. This was followed in April by the arrival of a fine pair of Bedford SB5 chassis mounted with forty-one seat Duple Bella Vega coachwork, taking the registrations 728/9 DBD



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*Jeffs' first brand new vehicle was this 12-seater Ford 400E / Martin Walter minibus, photographed at Victoria Gardens, Northampton. This vehicle was often used to operate the stage-carriage service from Weston on Sundays. (Photo courtesy R Marshall).*



*Helmdon Station yard is the setting for this photograph of 728 DBD, a handsome Duplex Bella Vega bodied Bedford SB5 coach of 1963 vintage.*

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*Sister Bedford SB5 / Duple Bella Vega coach 729 DBD was caught by the camera at Brackley, Market Place on this occasion when John Jeffs was driving and his father, Jack, was conducting, using a Bellgraphic ticket machine and assisting his passengers from the coach.*



*This time a rear view of Duple Bella Vega bodied Bedford 729 DBD, photographed at Victoria Coach Station, London, whilst on hire to United Counties.*

*(Photo courtesy R J Williamson).*

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One of John Jeffs' quests for additional work proved abortive in the latter half of 1963 when arrangements were made with Brackley F.M.C. Ltd to operate four coaches to convey their workers on Assisted Travel Schemes from the surrounding countryside to Brackley on Mondays to Fridays. The applications were subsequently withdrawn but it is possible that the required transport was provided for a few months during the Autumn of 1963. Somewhat more positively, licences to operate two coaches on Wednesday evenings from Towcester and Wappenham to Wincott's Ballroom at Banbury, for Bingo sessions, were granted in January 1964 under references TER 5355/9-10. John Jeffs also approached United Counties to see if he could obtain work duplicating that Company's Express services and those of Associated Motorways. This approach met with considerable success and throughout the 1960s and early 1970s Jeffs' Coaches were frequently seen operating on hire to United Counties.

After taking three brand new vehicles into stock in the Spring of 1963, Jack and John Jeffs then acquired seven used motors during the remainder of 1963 and 1964. These comprised a mixture of coaches, some suitable only for contract work and some well able to perform longer distance coaching operations. The incoming stock were a 1950 Bedford OB registered BBR 320; an A.E.C. Regal IV with a Harrington Wayfarer body which carried the index ERN 199, having been new in 1952 and, a four-year old Bedford SB1 with Plaxton Consort bodywork, registered RNL 994 and capable of front line duties. In addition there was a half-cab Daimler CVG6 registered KTC 984 acquired for contract duties; PDH 207 which was a Burlingham Seagull bodied Leyland Tiger and a pair of Bedford SBGs with Plaxton Viceroy coachwork, registered EX 9666 and EX 9800. Both these were new in 1956 and were still suitable for longer distance work. Outgoing were a number of coaches purchased earlier, leaving the fleet strength standing at ten coaches at the end of 1964.



*Just a glimpse of the attractive A.E.C. Regal IV registered ERN 199, with its uncommon Harrington Wayfarer body can be seen in this picture taken at Helmdon in 1964.*

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*The Mayorhold, Northampton provided the setting for this view of RNL 994, a 1960 Bedford SB1 fitted with Plaxton Consort IV coachwork seating forty-one passengers. Whilst working Jeffs' stage-carriage service on this occasion, RNL 994 could often be seen plying between Nottingham and London on United Counties' services.*

*(Photo courtesy M R Knight).*



*The pair of Plaxton Venturer bodied Bedford SBGs purchased by Jeffs' Coaches in 1964 can be seen in this photograph taken at Helmdon. EX 9800 is on the left and EX 9666 is on the right.*

*(Photo courtesy R Marshall).*

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It was mentioned earlier in this paper that Jack Jeffs rented the former rail station yard at Helmdon, from the Estates Department of British Railways London Midland Region. In 1963 Jack and John Jeffs decided to purchase the land from British Rail for the sum of £1,000 and this was effected on 16th April 1964, the Conveyance being signed on 8th May following. This land was purchased separately by Jack and John Jeffs and it was not owned by the Jeffs' Coaches partnership as such. The 2.7 acres of land stretched from the Station Road Bridge to the east end of the present day garage structure and then roughly the same distance again further eastwards. The site was further extended on 24th March 1966 when an additional tranche of land was acquired from British Railways, to the east of the original Station Yard site. A third area, to the north of the north-eastern boundary of the first piece of land purchased, was conveyed from a Flossie Brown to Jack and John Jeffs on 7th October 1970.

In March 1964 Jack and John Jeffs sought to rationalise one of the stage-carriage services they had acquired from Johnson / Lawrence. The Weston to Northampton service was extended to start one journey on Saturdays from Sulgrave, via Culworth, and the route terminated in Northampton at Victoria Gardens instead of at the Plough Hotel. The Sunday service was withdrawn at this juncture. At the same time application was made to the Commissioners for a new Express Service under reference TER 5355/11 for an Assisted Travel route for Plessey (UK) Ltd to convey that Company's workers from Banbury Town Hall via Middleton Cheney and Greatworth to Plessey's Water Lane, Towcester plant on Mondays to Fridays. The Sulgrave to Northampton timetable was now as shown below:-

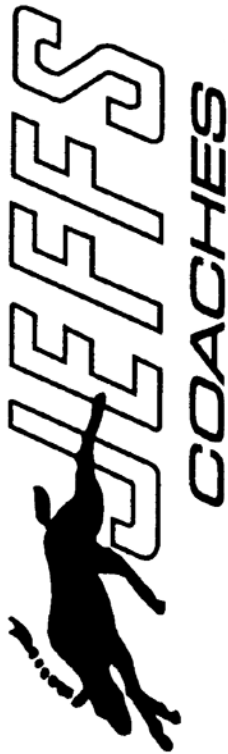
	<i>Wednesdays—</i>			<i>Saturdays—</i>			
	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Sulgrave (Kiosk, Magpie Farm) .. dep.	—	—	—	8-35	—	—	—
Culworth (Lindseys Corner) ..	—	—	—	8-40	—	—	—
Weston .. .. .	9-20	1-00	5-10	8-50	1-00	4-30	6-15
Lois Weedon .. .. .	9-23	1-03	5-13	8-53	1-03	4-33	—
Helmdon (The Square, The Stores)	—	—	—	—	—	—	6-25
Wappenham .. .. .	9-30	1-10	5-20	9-00	1-10	4-40	6-35
Slapton Bridge .. .. .	9-33	1-13	5-23	9-03	1-13	4-43	6-38
Abthorpe .. .. .	9-35	1-15	5-25	9-05	1-15	4-45	6-40
Handley .. .. .	9-40	1-20	5-30	9-10	1-20	4-50	6-45
Towcester .. .. .	9-45	1-25	5-35	9-15	1-25	4-55	6-50
Northampton .. .. . arr.	10-05	1-45	5-55	9-35	1-45	5-15	7-10

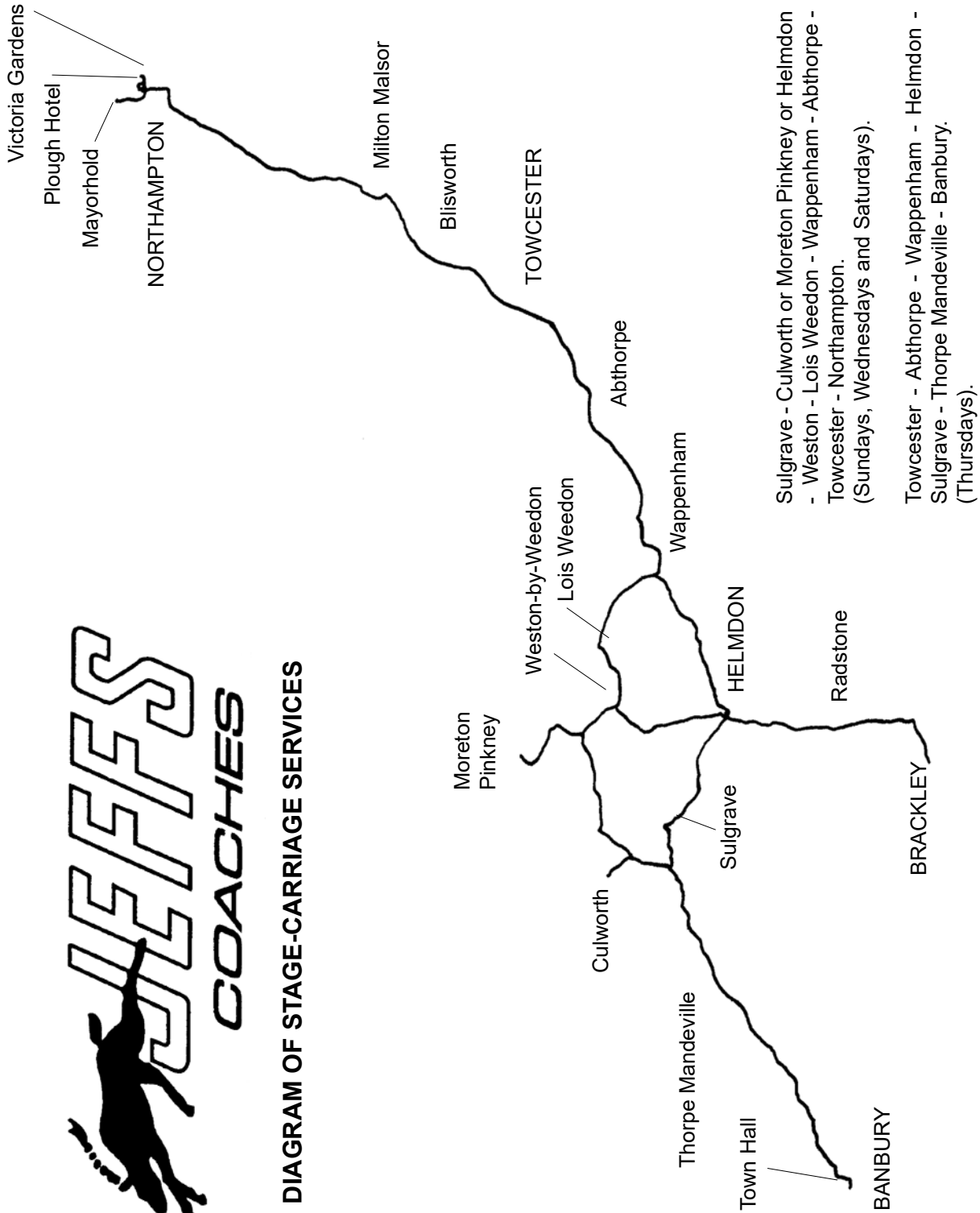
	<i>Wednesdays—</i>			<i>Saturdays—</i>			
	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton .. .. . dep.	12-00	3-00	6-00	12-00	3-00	5-30	10-30
Towcester .. .. .	12-20	3-20	6-20	12-20	3-20	5-50	10-50
Handley .. .. .	12-25	3-25	6-25	12-25	3-25	5-55	10-55
Abthorpe .. .. .	12-30	3-30	6-30	12-30	3-30	6-00	11-00
Slapton Bridge .. .. .	12-32	3-32	6-32	12-32	3-32	6-02	11-02
Wappenham .. .. .	12-35	3-35	6-35	12-35	3-35	6-05	11-05
Helmdon .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—	—	11-25
Lois Weedon .. .. .	12-42	3-42	6-42	12-42	3-42	6-12	11-12
Weston .. .. .	12-45	3-45	6-45	12-45	3-45	6-15	11-15
Culworth .. .. .	—	—	—	—	3-55	—	—
Sulgrave .. .. . arr.	—	—	—	—	4-00	—	—

Return buses leave from Northampton (Victoria Gardens).

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**DIAGRAM OF STAGE-CARRIAGE SERVICES**



Sulgrave - Culworth or Moreton Pinkney or Helmdon  
- Weston - Lois Weedon - Wappenham - Abthorpe -  
Towcester - Northampton.  
(Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays).

Towcester - Abthorpe - Wappenham - Helmdon -  
Sulgrave - Thorpe Mandeville - Banbury.  
(Thursdays).

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November 1964 saw Jeffs' Coaches applying for a new stage-carriage service to convey passengers between Helmdon and Brackley via Radstone on Friday mornings. When granted by the Commissioners this service took the reference TER 5355/12. Shortly afterwards a Tuesday only early evening facility was added to the licence. In June 1965 Jack and John Jeffs applied successfully to add a further two dozen excursions to their licence for Helmdon. Little mention has so far been made of Jeffs' extensive private hire operations and, equally as important, the firm's continental trips for various Education Authorities, Schools, local businesses and hire clients, but these operations formed an important part of the firm's overall business.

The two Bedford SB5 coaches acquired new by Jeffs' Coaches in 1963, registered 728/9 DBD, were traded in during the Spring of 1965 and three new Bedford SB5s replaced them. Two carried the most attractive Plaxton Embassy IV bodies of the time whilst the third was mounted with Duple Bella Vega coachwork. Registered DNV 376-8C all three seated forty-one passengers. These were also the first coaches to carry Jeffs' now famous logo of a leaping impala, chosen as a symbol to convey both elegance and speed, a striking image that still looks remarkably fresh in 2009 nearly fifty years since it was first introduced. Also outgoing from the fleet at this time were the Daimler KTC 984 and Leyland Tiger PDH 207 bought in the previous year.



*In the Author's opinion the Plaxton Embassy IV body was an elegant design and looked well on DNV 376C, a 1965 Bedford SB5. The Helmdon Depot provides the setting for this photograph.*

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*The rear of sister coach DNV 377C can be seen in this shot which also depicts Jeffs' professionally designed logo.*

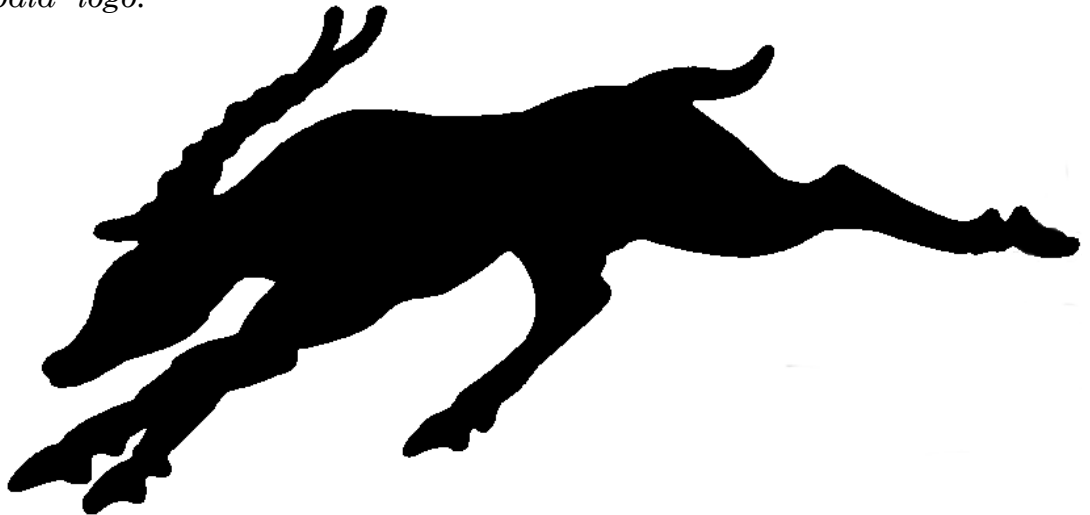


*The Duple Bella Vega bodied Bedford SB5 which became Jeffs' DNV 378C did not remain in the fleet for as long as the two Plaxton bodied coaches and photographs of DNV 378C are therefore more difficult to locate. However, in this picture it can be seen alongside DNV 376C. (Photo courtesy M R Knight).*



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*A facsimile of Jeffs' Coaches  
"leaping impala" logo.*



For the Spring Term in 1966 Jeffs' sought a stage-carriage licence from the Traffic Commissioners to run a schoolday service between Banbury, The Link and Banbury, St.Louis' School using two coaches on separate routes, with no fares being collected on the vehicles. This was quickly reclassified as an express service and became licensed as TER 5355/13.

In February 1966 the stage-carriage service from Sulgrave to Northampton, Victoria Gardens reverted to its earlier terminal at Weston, with the Wednesday timetable remaining unaltered but the Saturday timetable dropping from four to three return trips from Weston to Northampton. The Saturday evening facility was withdrawn.

May 1966 witnessed Jeffs' applying for an express service licence to convey passengers between Banbury Bus Station and Coventry, Pool Meadow on Saturday evenings for the purpose of providing a facility to the Locarno Ballroom in the latter City. TER 5355/14 was the Commissioners reference for this operation. Soon afterwards, in September 1966, Jeffs' two coaches provided from Towcester and Wappenham to Wincott's Ballroom at Banbury, for Bingo sessions, were licensed to operate on Monday evenings instead of Wednesdays.

Fleet changes for 1966 witnessed the importation of four older vehicles, mainly for contract work but some were good enough to be used for more demanding operations. This quartet were all on Bedford chassis, two SB1 models registered WAW 370 and 8590 HK respectively and both carrying forty-one seat Duple Vega coachwork; an SB dating from 1951 with thirty-three seat Duple Vega body and registered OHT 595; and ADY 229B which was a smaller VAS1 with Duple Bella Vista twenty-nine seat coachwork. All four are illustrated on the following pages and all were additional vehicles to the Jeffs' fleet.

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*WAW 370, a Duple Super Vega bodied Bedford SB1 is seen here operating a private hire, but it perhaps more often ran on the Weston to Northampton or Banbury local services.*



*A small Bedford VAS1 was always useful in Jeffs' fleet and ADY 229B carries a Duple Bella Vista body that seated twenty-nine passengers. (Photo courtesy M R Knight).*

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*Seen at the end of its life is OHT 595, a Bedford SB / Duple Vega thirty-three seater that was already fifteen years old when Jeffs' bought it. It was retained for only a couple of years.*



*The Bedford SB1 registered 8590 HK was photographed at the Mayorhold, Northampton whilst working the local service between Weston and Northampton.  
(Photo courtesy M R Knight).*

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Three new and two secondhand vehicles formed the Jeffs' rolling stock programme for 1967. First to arrive, in February, was a Bedford VAL14 with fifty-two seater Duple Viceroy 36 bodywork and this machine collected the registration number KRP 52E, replacing elderly A.E.C. Regal ERN 199. Next, Jeffs' minibus 727 DBD was traded in for a replacement Ford Transit twelve seater which took the index LRP 50E. In September 1967 a pair of used Plaxton Embassy bodied Bedford SB1s were bought and these were noted as 234 UTE and 278 VTB. The final new machinery for 1967 arrived in November in the form of a Bedford VAL70 mounted with fifty-two seat Duple Viceroy 36 bodywork and registered NNV 999F.



*KRP 52E was a Bedford VAL14 which carried Duple Viceroy 36 coachwork and was the first 52 seater coach in the Jeffs' fleet.*  
*(Photo courtesy M R Knight).*



*A facsimile of a Jeffs' Coaches letterhead dating from the mid-1960s.*

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*Purchased to replace 727 DBD was LRP 50E, a Ford Transit with twelve seat Williams Deansgate body. Not a particularly attractive vehicle although very useful.*



*One of the two six-year-old Plaxton Embassy bodied Bedford SB1s purchased by Jeffs' Coaches in September 1967 was 234 UTE. Again the Mayorhold, Northampton is the scene of the photograph.  
(Photo courtesy M R Knight).*

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*The other used Bedford SB1/Plaxton Embassy coach was 278 VTB and both acquisitions were a welcome addition to Jeffs' fleet. (Photo courtesy M R Knight).*



*Jeffs' second Duple Viceroy 36 bodied Bedford VAL was NNV 999F, new in November 1967. (Photo courtesy J P Bennett).*

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Previous mention has been made that Jack and Eileen Jeffs lived at Rose Cottage in Helmdon but in 1966 the couple had a bungalow built on part of the Station Yard site, close to the entrance to the depot. Building work started in the late summer of 1966 and the bungalow was ready for occupation by March 1967.



*Jack Jeffs stands outside his new bungalow at Helmdon Station Yard, completed in 1967. Very rarely could Jack be seen without his cap!*

Service amendments occurring during 1967 saw the western terminal of the Weston to Northampton stage-carriage service again being extended, but this time to Moreton Pinkney, with adjustments to the Saturday timetable. These alterations occurred in May and by August steps were taken to move the Northampton terminal from Victoria Gardens to the Mayorhold.

Interestingly, in September 1967, Jeffs' applied to the Traffic Commissioners to take over the operations of M G Button of Brackley who traded variously as Crookston's Coaches and Borderline Coaches. Button's licences were as follows:-

TER 5547/2 - Express - Fringford - Bicester C.O.D.

TER 4447/5 - Express - Banbury Bus Station - Brackley.

TER 5547/4 - Excursions & Tours Brackley.

TER 5547/3 - Excursions & Tours Brackley.

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Jeffs' references for the above were TER 5355/18-21. It is assumed by the Author, but unconfirmed, that Jack and John Jeffs were negotiating with Mr Button to acquire his business, but for reasons unknown, the negotiations floundered. In any event, Jeffs' application for the above four licences were withdrawn by November 1967.

Additional work came Jeffs' way in March 1968 when a contract was awarded to the firm to provide transport from Helmdon and Brackley to the factory of Wipac Ltd, at Buckingham. Once again it was an Assisted Travel Scheme run on Mondays to Fridays on Jeffs' new Express service licence TER 5355/22.

In May 1968 the Wappenham to Banbury Bingo bus became free to patrons as the coach was henceforth paid for by Popular Pastimes Ltd and at the same time the second coach from Towcester appears to have been discontinued. The Banbury Link to St.Louis' School service was also discontinued, presumably at the end of the Summer term in July 1968 and its licence was not renewed at its normal expiry date.

During 1968 Jack and John Jeffs decided to erect a garage and workshop on the Helmdon site and arrangements were made for Messrs. Crendon Concrete of Thame to erect the main structure and roof. A local builder was engaged to complete the brick walls and interior fittings, as well as hang the doors. The two 40ft and one 30ft pits were dug by Jeffs' own employees. The completion date of the workshop has not been established but the building was in use by the early summer of 1969 at the latest.



*Jeffs' new Helmdon workshop building.*



### JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

No new coaches were purchased in 1968, in fact the fleet total dropped from sixteen to fifteen with the withdrawal of the elderly Bedford SB registered OHT 595. However, things were set to change in 1969 when a total of nine vehicles joined the fleet - six new motors and three secondhand machines. The first new vehicles were a pair of twelve seater Ford Transit minibuses with Luton Commercial Motors body conversions - registered SBD 682/3G. Following on quickly were two used acquisitions, the first of which was a Plaxton Embassy IV bodied Bedford SB5 like Jeffs' existing coaches DNV 376/7C, although the acquired coach was registered FPT 874C. The second used purchase was a Bedford SB1 fitted with a Harrington Crusader thirty-seven seat body and registered 875 NNU. This machine was retained for only three months. Three new deliveries then appeared at Helmdon with the first being SBD 684G, which was a Duple Viceroy bodied Ford R192 seating forty-five passengers. A pair of heavyweight chassis came next as TNV 840/1G and these were Leyland Leopard models carrying Duple Commander IV fifty-one seat bodies. The final new delivery was another Ford Transit minibus which collected the index TRP 706H in August 1969. Last, but not least, was the acquisition of JCU 250, a Duple Bella Vega bodied Bedford SB5 dating from 1963.

Outgoing during 1969, apart from the Harrington bodied 875 NNU already mentioned, were the two Bedford SB1s bought two years earlier as 234 UTE and 278 VTB, along with the pair of two-year-old Bedford VALs, KRP 52E and NNV 999F, traded in for new coaches. At the end of all this activity the Jeffs' fleet comprised nineteen vehicles.



*Looking very sleek is FPT 874C, the Bedford SB5 coach with Plaxton Embassy IV body bought secondhand in 1969. (Photo courtesy R Marshall).*



*Leaving Buckingham Palace with a party of children from the National Children's Home branch at Brackley is TNV 841G, one of Jeffs' first new Leyland Leopards with Duple Commander IV coachwork. It seems Her Majesty the Queen regularly invited parties from the National Children's Homes to see the Changing of the Guard and to visit the Royal Mews and State Coaches.*

Early in 1969 John Jeffs was approached by the Gulf American Corporation which was in the business of attracting well-to-do mature American couples visiting London, wining and dining them and then promoting the sale of real estate in Florida for retirement homes or investment. Evidently representative of this firm had seen Jeffs' Coaches touring in London and felt they presented the right image for the promotion of their own business. The outcome of meetings at the Hilton Hotel resulted in John Jeffs supplying three twelve-seater minibuses which were used to collect small groups of Americans from tourist spots such as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London and conveying them to the Hilton Hotel where they would transfer to a larger coach - ADY 229B, a Bedford VAS1 - and be taken around even more famous London tourist attractions. Following the coach trip the passengers would be returned to the Hilton, given a meal, then a sales presentation, after which it was hoped they could be persuaded to buy the plots of Florida swamp land on offer.

#### JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

These tours were operated by Jeffs' Coaches three times a day, seven days a week for a period of about three years. This work paid handsomely for Jeffs' and was undoubtedly instrumental in giving the firm the confidence to branch out in more unconventional operations in the 1970s - for example weekly coach transfers to the Continent in collaboration with other tour operators, as well as extensive continental hires.

It is almost certain that two of the three minibuses purchased for the above operation were SBD 682/3G - Ford Transits which operated in a white livery in London. The third one may have been the existing Transit registered LRP 50E until replaced later in 1969 by TRP 706H, another new Ford Transit 12-seater.

In May 1969 the Traffic Commissioners granted licences to Jeffs' Coaches for three new leisure services which could carry only members of the ABC Social Club at Banbury. One coach departed from Sulgrave at 6.45pm on Thursdays, proceeding via Culworth, Chipping Warden and Wardington; a second coach left Charlton at 7.00pm on Thursdays and operated via Kings Sutton whilst on Wednesdays there was a 6.50pm from Helmdon to Banbury via Brackley. All three journeys returned at 9.15pm after the Bingo session.

Interestingly, in May 1969, Jack and John Jeffs took over the Helmdon to Northampton, Helmdon to Banbury stage-carriage services, and Excursions & Tours from Helmdon that had originated with Sam Walters and sold to Harry Webster of Pattishall in 1958. Thus, some eleven years after this latter event, Jack Jeffs gained the routes that for years he had anticipated would one day be his. As Jeffs' Coaches were already running services to both Northampton and Banbury, their existing routes were modified to accommodate the former Webster's services. The Moreton Pinkney to Northampton, Mayorhold service was truncated at Helmdon and its timetable amended, as also were the timings on the Banbury service. Jeffs' timetables were now as follows:-

		<i>Wednesdays—</i>			<i>Saturdays—</i>		
		a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Helmdon	.. ..	9-15	1-00	5-00	9-00	1-00	4-30
Weston	.. ..	9-20	12-55	—	9-05	12-55	4-35
Lois Weedon	.. ..	9-25	12-50	—	9-10	12-50	4-10
Wappenham	.. ..	9-30	1-10	5-10	9-15	1-10	4-45
Slapton Bridge	.. ..	9-35	1-15	5-15	9-20	1-15	4-50
Abthorpe	.. ..	9-40	1-20	5-20	9-25	1-20	4-55
Towcester	.. ..	9-50	1-30	5-30	9-35	1-30	5-05
Northampton	.. ..	10-05	1-45	5-45	9-50	1-45	5-20
		p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton	.. ..	12-10	2-45	5-45	12-10	3-30	5-45
Towcester	.. ..	12-25	3-00	6-00	12-25	3-45	6-00
Abthorpe	.. ..	12-35	3-10	6-10	12-35	3-55	6-10
Slapton Bridge	.. ..	12-40	3-15	6-15	12-40	4-00	6-15
Wappenham	.. ..	12-45	3-20	6-20	12-45	4-05	6-20
Lois Weedon	.. ..	12-50	3-25	6-25	12-50	4-10	6-25
Weston	.. ..	12-55	3-30	6-30	12-55	4-15	6-30
Helmdon	.. ..	1-00	3-35	6-35	1-00	4-20	6-35

*Timetable for the Helmdon to Northampton service in 1969.*

### JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

#### JEFFS COACHES

R. J. Jeffs, J. V. Jeffs

#### HELMDON, BRACKLEY

Tel. Sulgrave 365, Brackley 2212

### TOWCESTER - BANBURY

#### THURSDAYS ONLY

	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Towcester	9-05	—	—	—
Abthorpe	9-15	—	—	—
Slapton Bridge	9-20	—	—	—
Wappenham	9-25	—	—	—
Helmdon	9-35	—	1-00	—
Sulgrave	9-40	11-20	1-05	—
Thorpe Mandeville	9-45	11-25	1-10	—
Banbury	10-00	11-40	1-25	—

	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Banbury	11-00	12-00	2-50	5-00
Thorpe Mandeville	11-15	12-15	3-05	5-15
Sulgrave	11-20	12-20	3-10	5-20
Helmdon	—	12-25	3-15	5-25
Wappenham	—	—	3-25	—
Slapton Bridge	—	—	3-30	—
Abthorpe	—	—	3-35	—
Towcester	—	—	3-45	—

#### FARES :

Towcester								
1/-	Abthorpe							
1/1	4	Slapton						
1/2	8	4	Wappenham					
1/5	1/1	1/-	8	Helmdon				
1/11	1/5	1/3	1/1	8	Sulgrave			
2/3	1/11	1/7	1/7	1/1	9	Thorpe		
3/-	2/8	2/6	2/6	2/3	1/7	1/3	Banbury	

#### Price 2d.

Danetre Press, 42 Oxford Street, Daventry 3707

*Time and Faretables for the Towcester to Banbury service in 1969.*

JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

The end of the 'sixties decade is a convenient point at which to end the first part of this story of Jeffs' Coaches. Starting in unusual circumstances with one coach in 1958 and growing the business successfully to nineteen vehicles within the space of just over eleven years was no mean achievement. Part 2 will continue the story throughout the 1970s.

*The Author is grateful to Jack and Eileen Jeffs, John and Pamela Jeffs, Ken and Rita Jeffs, David Brookhouse and David Little for information supplied, often over many years, without which this paper could not have been written.*

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

## NN-JE2

Part 1: 1958 - 1969

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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			
	MDD 688	Bedford	SB	14595	Duple Vega	C37F	1081/9	3/53	6/58	6/61	Morgan, Corse Lawn	Daisy, Broughton	
	CBD 101	Bedford	OWB	12504	Duple Vista	C29F (8/49)	?	-/43	11/58	by 7/64	Adams, Rothwell	Mobile Shop	
	DJR 343	A.E.C.	Regal III	9621A1106	Plaxton	C33F		-/50	2/61	c3/64	Brazier, Roydon		
	TBU 52	Bedford	SB3	70782	Duple Vega	C41F	1105/456	6/59	by 5/61	3/63	Healing, Oldham	Ward, Oakham	
	RWD 829	Bedford	SBG	37200	Duple Vega	C38F	1055/332	5/55	by 7/61	c6/63	Cotton, Bilton	Ransomes & Marles, Newark	
	WAT 100	Bedford	SBG	50861	Duple Vega	C41F	1074/183	2/57	11/61	6/72	Farmery, Moorthorpe		
	HDG 473	A.E.C.	Regal III	9621E447	Duple A	C35F	45295	9/48	2/62	12/64	Gough, Bracknell	Webster, Pattishall	
	FP 8418	Morris	J2	J2VM37479	Kenex	C11F	—	11/58	by -/63	12/63	Mellor, Littlethorpe	Gilbert, Bovingdon	
	727 DBD	Ford	400E	LO5B231574	Martin Walter	C12F	—	2/63	—	6/67	—	Lomas, Congleton	
	728 DBD	Bedford	SB5	91790	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1158/251	4/63	—	3/65	—		
	729 DBD	Bedford	SB5	91791	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1159/196	4/63	—	3/65	—	Bailiss, Barton - in-the-Beans	
	BBR 320	Bedford	OB	145428	Duple Vista	C29F	50152	11/50	11/63	4/64	Chapman, Sawtry	Lewis, Pailton	
	ERN 199	A.E.C.	Regal IV	9821E227	Harrington Wayfarer	C41C		3/52	1/64	2/67	Gee, Lutterworth	Ryan Enniscurthy	
	RNL 994	Bedford	SB1	78487	Plaxton Consort IV	C41F	602926	3/60	3/64	by 11/77	Armstrong, Westerhope	(at Helmdon 3/82)	
	KTC 984	Daimler	CVG6	16370	Plaxton	C35F		3/49	3/64	12/65		Aston, Marton	
	PDH 207	Leyland	Tiger PSU1	520108	Burlingham Seagull	C41C		4/52	5/64	3/65	Simonds, Botesdale	Baxter, Birmingham	
	EX 9666	Bedford	SBG	43346	Plaxton Venturer	C41F	2775	5/56	9/64	12/73	Sportsman, Ilford		
	EX 9800	Bedford	SBG	46850	Plaxton Venturer	C41F	2899	5/56	9/64	12/73	Sportsman, Ilford	Caravan	
	DNV 376C	Bedford	SB5	96761	Plaxton Embassy IV	C41F	652830	3/65	—	2/78	—	Padlay, Anwick	

Notes:

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# Bygone Buses

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JEFFS' COACHES - HELMDON

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	DNV 377C	Bedford	SB5	96799	Plaxton Embassy IV	C41F	652831	3/65	—	by 7/78	—		
	DNV 378C	Bedford	SB5	96798	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1183/83	4/65	—	10/71	—	Buxton, Primethorpe	
	WAW 370	Bedford	SB1	86388	Duple Vega	C41F	1133/200	3/61	1/66	1/71	Steel. Liverpool	Maybury, Souldern (for spares)	
	ADY 229B	Bedford	VAS1	1800	Duple Bella Vista	C29F	1171/60	7/64	5/66	5/71	Goodall, Ipswich	Andrews, Aldershot	
	OHT 595	Bedford	SB	3676	Duple Vega	C33F	1006/241	1/51	10/66	8/68	Riddiford, Thornbury		
	8590 HK	Bedford	SB1	61996	Duple Vega	C41F	1090/269	5/58	11/66	10/74	Bray Transport, Bray	Storage shed, Helmdon (3/82)	
	KRP 52E	Bedford	VAL14	6861271	Duple Viceroy 36	C52F	1209/25	2/67	—	7/69	—	Davies, Leeswood	
	LRP 50E	Ford	Transit	BC05GE 39864	Williams Deansgate	C12F	—	6/67	—	9/72	—	Gath, Ravensthorpe	
	234 UTE	Bedford	SB1	88053	Plaxton Embassy I	C41F	612630	5/61	9/67	6/69	Fieldsend, Salford	Leon, Finningley	
	278 VTB	Bedford	SB1	88054	Plaxton Embassy I	C41F	612689	6/61	9/67	6/69	Fieldsend, Salford	Moon, Shepshed	
	NNV 999F	Bedford	VAL70	7857156	Duple Viceroy 36	C52F	179/81	11/67	—	7/69	—	Danby, Hull	
	SBD 682G	Ford	Transit	BC05HE 49235	Luton Comm. Mtrs	C12F	—	1/69	—	9/72	—	Densley, Bath	
	SBD 683G	Ford	Transit	BC05HS 54511	Luton Comm. Mtrs	C12F	—	2/69	—	1/80	—		
	SBD 684G	Ford	R192	BC04HT 52934	Duple Viceroy	C45F	1227/41	7/69	—	6/71	—	Welwyn, St.Albans	
	FPT 874C	Bedford	SB5	97095	Plaxton Embassy IV	C41F	653094	4/65	2/69	1/82	Pemberton, Upton	Car transporter	
	875 NNU	Bedford	SB1	75290	Harrington Crusader I	C37F		3/60	3/69	6/69	Wansbeck, Ashington	Collins, Barlby	
	TNV 840G	Leyland	Leopard PSU3A/4R	901113	Duple Comm'der IV	C51F	204/23	7/69	—	7/77	—	Orsborn, Wollaston	
	TNV 841G	Leyland	Leopard PSU3A/4R	901102	Duple Comm'der IV	C51F	204/24	7/69	—	8/77	—	Orsborn, Wollaston	
	TRP 706H	Ford	Transit	BC05JB 46683	Ford	C12F	—	8/69	—	7/72	—	Williams & Davies, Betws	
	JCU 250	Bedford	SB5	9177116194	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	1159/282	5/63	9/69	8/74	Studley Garage, Studley	(Still at Helmdon 3/82)	

Notes:

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