

Birch Brothers Ltd.



1899-1971

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Cover Illustration: K180 (HLY480), a 1946 Leyland PD1, originally with Birch Brothers 53-seat lowbridge bodywork, but seen here after it was re-bodied by MCCW with 56-seat bodywork in 1956. (LTHL collection).

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In the early years of the nineteenth century, William Birch left Plymouth, where his father (also William Birch) was involved in the running of the Exeter to Plymouth stagecoach, to seek his fortune in London. By 1815 he had acquired the lease of premises in Horseferry Road for use as a dairy farm. These premises were subsequently used by his son, also William, from 1832 in connection with his cab business. On 13 April 1846, William Birch (the son), was thrown from his gig and died two days later from his injuries. His widow continued the cab business in order to support their two sons and in 1847 financially assisted William Hattersley, along with two other cab proprietors, Gamble and Langley to start a new bus route from the Monster, Pimlico to Mansion House, which subsequently prospered, since, at the time, the only other route was by steam boat from Westminster Pier. The three proprietors operated jointly as the Westminster Omnibus Association.

In 1851, the Great Exhibition provided an opportunity for Mrs. Birch to run buses on her own account. She purchased four, placing two in service on 1 May 1851 on the Monster-Mansion House route, using the chocolate livery of the Westminster Omnibus Association, operating the remaining two on a route to the Exhibition in Hyde Park later the same month. When the Great Exhibition closed later in the year, all the buses were employed on the Monster-Mansion House route and Mrs Birch also purchased Hattersley's share of the joint venture, becoming owner of half the buses in the Westminster Omnibus Association. In the same period the cab side

of the business was considerably expanded to such an extent that around 200 horses were required.

In 1856 the London General Omnibus Company was formed, whose strategy was to buy up the smaller operators rather than try to oust them by force and by 1857 they had succeeded in purchasing upward of 600 horse-buses, including the other 50% of the Westminster Omnibus Association. This strategy, however, soon put up the purchase price of the remaining operators and the LGOC were forced into partnership agreements with those who would not sell, including Mrs. Birch. This resulted in a pooling arrangement that lasted over 50 years, until the LGOC pulled out of the Associations in 1909.

In 1865 a new route between Hanwell (where Mrs. Birch was resident) and London Bridge was inaugurated and at the same time a new depot was established in Hanwell itself. When Mrs. Birch died in 1874, the route was abandoned due to competition from the new horse tramway along Uxbridge Road and activities were concentrated nearer to the city centre. Her two sons, John Manley Birch and William Samuel Birch, who had become joint partners on her death, dissolved their partnership in 1878 and sold their running times on the Westminster Association's routes.

John Manley Birch bought running times in the Camden Town Omnibus Association and new premises in Cathcart Street, Kentish Town. In 1887,

he started a Royal Mail service between London and Brighton on contract to the Post Office. Similar contracts were obtained between London and other destinations, with the last, between London and Oxford, operating continuously from 1891 to 1909. This resulted in the premises being dubbed Royal Mail Yard.

William Samuel Birch purchased running times in the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association and continued to operate from the premises in Horseferry Road. He was joined in 1885 by his son, William Henry Birch, the company becoming Birch & Son. In 1898 William Henry Birch started his own omnibus business and was so successful that he was able to retire in 1909 (after winding up the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association, of which he was by then chairman).

In November 1899 John Manley Birch and William Samuel Birch again joined forces, this time under the name of Birch Brothers Limited.

In 1904 Birch Brothers put two Milnes-Daimler motorbuses into service, with another fourteen, which were bodied in their own workshops, entering service between 1904 and 1907. The livery of these vehicles followed the current practice of horse-bus operators, vehicles on a specific route being the same colour, so some received the livery of the Camden Town Association (which was yellow, giving rise to the nickname 'Mustard Pots'), whilst others received the crimson lake and cream livery of the

Atlas & Waterloo Association. Unfortunately the early motorbuses were untried and proved troublesome and after mounting losses over the three years, Birch Brothers withdrew from motorised transport and returned to the reliable horse-bus. The last Birch Brothers horse-bus ran early in 1912 on the Hendon to Golders Green route and for a time Birch Brothers withdrew completely from the operation of omnibuses and concentrated on the taxicab business, supplementing this income with horse-drawn contracts from the Post Office.

Birch Brothers had commenced manufacturing their own bus bodies at the turn of the century and the expertise they had gained now came to the fore. A contract for the maintenance of omnibus bodies for the British Automobile Traction concern was won in 1912 and this continued until the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933, when the BAT activities in London ceased.

The rapid development of the motor vehicle brought about by the advent of the First World War and the need for reliability meant that in the postwar period the standards of chassis available were far in excess of those available before the war. With this in mind Birch Brothers purchased some ex-War Department chassis and re-bodied them in their own workshops with char-a-banc bodies and commenced a series of tours. Such was their success that it prompted the company to re-enter the motorbus business once again.

In 1924 the Company placed an order with Leyland Motors for ten LB5 chassis (although only 7 were finally delivered), for bodying in their own workshops. At the same time the stables at the premises in Cathcart Street were rebuilt to accommodate the new bus fleet. Application was made to the Metropolitan Police (who were empowered by the London Traffic Act of 1924 to approve such applications) to operate on the following routes (jointly with Overground, a company based at Chalk Hill Road): Potters Bar to Hampton Court (route 206, re-numbered 227 in 1929); Hadley Highstone to Elephant & Castle (route 227A); Muswell Hill to Victoria Station (route 285); and Potters Bar to Victoria Station (route 284), all of which were approved.

The first few vehicles carried the fleetname 'Archway', but by 1927 the fleetname Birch had been adopted. The standard livery at the time was coffee, Spanish brown and cream, which remained in use until just before the Second World War, when it became cream with lime green relief. This in turn lasted until the late 1950's, when it was replaced by a cream with pillar-box red relief livery. Fleet numbers were applied in separate sequences to both buses and coaches, with buses receiving a 'B' prefix and coaches a 'K' prefix ('C' was already in use for Birch Brothers cabs), although eventually both buses and coaches were given the same 'K' prefix.

In 1925 a joint venture with the City Motor Omnibus Company and the United Motor Omnibus Company to run on the following routes was undertaken;

Highgate to Brockley Cross (route 536A - weekdays); Highgate to Brockley Rise (route 536 - Sundays only) and on 24th May 1925 the West London Association was set up between operators on a new route (526D) between Wandsworth Bridge and North Finchley, via Shepherds Bush and Cricklewood, of which Birch Brothers was one. The Association was set up to protect the interests of the operators on the route, ensuring that a regular frequency was maintained without undue competition. It also allowed each proprietor to provide its own crews and vehicles and to retain the takings from each journey. By 1926 Birch Brothers was also operating a single vehicle on the 15A Ladbroke Grove to East Ham route, but in 1927 it was transferred to operate on the 268 route between Uxbridge and Liverpool Street. This year saw the formation of the London Public Omnibus Company, comprising about 50% of the independent operators then running in London. Birch Brothers, wisely as it turned out, chose not to join the new Company, which succumbed to a take-over by the London General Omnibus Company just twelve months later.

In 1930 the LGOC concluded an agreement with Birch Brothers, which resulted in the LGOC withdrawing from the Hendon to Mill Hill service in return for Birch Brothers withdrawal from routes 26D, 227, 266 and 284A. The LGOC also conceded the running times to two Birch double-deckers on the former West London Association's 526D route (Wandsworth Bridge to North Finchley), the other operators on the route having been acquired by the LGOC.

The passing of the London Passenger Transport Act of 1933, created an area in which all services were to be operated by the newly formed London Passenger Transport Board. As a result, on 21 February 1934, all Birch Brothers routes in London (and the 28 vehicles used to operate them) were compulsorily purchased.

With this eventuality in mind, Birch Brothers had made an early start to expand their operations in other directions. In November 1928 a service to Bedford from London was inaugurated, using newly purchased coaches, and was an immediate success, being extended as far as Kettering by 1930. In 1932 a competitor on the route (Beaumont Safeway Coaches) was acquired, and this route subsequently became the primary route of the Company until its withdrawal from stage carriage work in 1969, although during the Second World War it was curtailed to stop at Rushden, where the terminus subsequently remained.

Between 1928 and 1969 the following country routes were operated,

- 203 London - Welwyn - Hitchin - Bedford - Rushden (Daily)
- 203M London - M1 Motorway - Bedford - Rushden (Daily)
- 204 Hitchin - Whitwell - Welwyn (Daily except Sunday)
- 205 Welwyn - Kimpton - Luton (Daily)
- 206 Luton - Whitwell (Thursday/Saturday/Sunday with extension to Welwyn on Saturday and Sunday)

- 209 Henlow Camp - Hitchin (Daily)
- 210 Harrold - Odell - Sharnbrook - Rushden (Weekdays only)
- 211 Harrold - Carlton - Pavenham - Bedford (Daily)
- 212 Henlow Camp - Luton (Daily)
- 213 Gravenhurst - Campton - Shefford - Bedford (Saturdays only)
- 225 Hitchin - Henlow (continuing to Gravenhurst on Tuesdays OR to Shillington on Saturdays)

In January 1938, Birch Brothers acquired Pirton Belle, of Pirton, together with routes from Luton to Letchworth, via Pirton; and Hitchin to Pirton. Two months later in March 1938 they acquired Sunbeam of Gravenhurst, which included routes from Campton to Luton; and Gravenhurst to Hitchin, along with Twydell of Shillington, which brought Birch Brothers another route, from Shillington to Hitchin. The following month the Whitwell Bus Company was taken over along with routes from Luton to Whitwell, and from Hitchin to Whitwell. In May 1938 Birch Brothers turned their attention to the Rushden area, when three local operators; Abbot & Sons, G. Robinson, and G. H. Scroxtton were acquired together with their tours and excursion licences from Rushden. Finally, in July 1938 Perseverance of Shillington was purchased and three more routes; Meppershall to Luton; Shillington to Hitchin; and Henlow Camp to Luton acquired. A new depot had already been built in High Street North, Rushden during 1937, but the increase in vehicles required to operate the

additional services meant that a further depot was needed. This was constructed in London Road, Henlow Camp, close to the RAF base there.

By 1940, double-deck vehicles had been introduced on the London to Rushden route and eventually most of the country routes were worked by double-deck vehicles.

Another route was acquired in June 1944 with the purchase of the business of Enterprise of Kimpton (Welwyn to Luton, via Kimpton).

When the Second World War ended, a decision was taken to divide the coach and bus business into two separate companies. The bus company would retain the title Birch Brothers Limited, whilst the coaching side would operate under the resurrected name of Ingarfield & Bright (a company Birch Brothers had acquired in 1928). In 1950 the coaching business became Birch Brothers (Ingarfield & Bright) Ltd and by 1955 it was Birch Brothers (Transport) Limited.

A period of consolidation followed, although in the 1960's, the company was hit by falling passenger numbers. The last double-deck vehicle ran in 1967, and the services were reduced to single-deck operation. On 26 December 1963, after over 130 years, the last Birch Brothers cab was withdrawn. In July 1966, Birch Brothers took over the business of Monico

Motorways of Kentish Town, a coach operator, whose vehicles were added to the Birch Brothers (Transport) fleet, receiving an 'M' suffix.

With the downturn in passenger numbers it was decided to abandon the stage carriage services altogether, the first few routes going on the 14 October 1968 along with the garage at Henlow Camp and on 14 September 1969, the final two routes (Nos. 203/203M) passed to United Counties together with twelve vehicles.

The coaching side of the business was retained, operating mainly from the Kentish Town garage, until 1 February 1971 when this business was sold to the George Ewer Group, along with the remaining coaches, and Birch Brothers bowed out of public transport for the final time.

Bus Fleet List 1904-1971

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Reg. No; Chassis; Chassis No; Body; Seating.

1904

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------------|----|-------|----------|
| - | A7045-46 | Milnes Daimler | ?? | Birch | 018/16R0 |
|---|----------|----------------|----|-------|----------|

One of these vehicles probably had the chassis no. 1507.
Withdrawn **1907** (A7045-7046).

1905

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|----------------|-------|-------|----------|
| - | A8545 | Milnes Daimler | ?? | Birch | 018/16R0 |
| - | LC1043 | Milnes Daimler | 1810? | Birch | 018/16R0 |
| - | LC3160 | Milnes Daimler | 1827? | Birch | 018/16R0 |

Withdrawn **1907** (A8545, LC1043, LC3160).



1905 Milnes-Daimler A8545, with Birch Brothers own 34-seat bodywork, operating for the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association from whom Birch Brothers had purchased running rights. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

1906

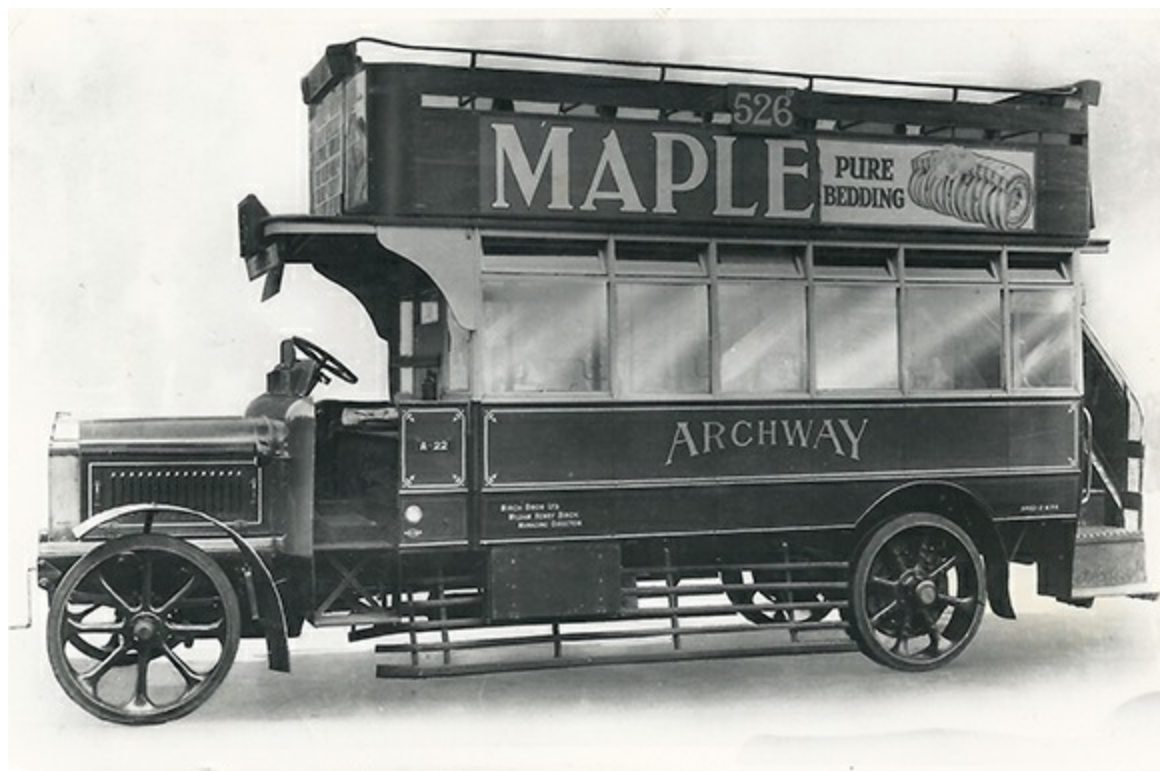
| | | | | | |
|---|--------|------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| - | LC3680 | Leyland-Crossley | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC4813 | De Dion | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC5476 | Milnes Daimler | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC6193 | Milnes Daimler | 3645? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC6505 | De Dion | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC7590 | Milnes Daimler | 3815? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | LC7743 | Milnes Daimler | 3829 | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | ?? | De Dion | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |

Withdrawn **1907** (unknown De Dion, LC4813, LC5476, LC6193, LC6505, LC7590, LC7743), **1908** (LC3680).

1907

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|------------------|----|-------|----------|
| - | LN3317 | Leyland-Crossley | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | ?? | Milnes Daimler | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |
| - | ?? | Milnes Daimler | ?? | Birch | 018/16RO |

Withdrawn **1907** (both Milnes Daimler's), **1908** (LN3317).



For a while Birch Brothers used the 'Archway' fleetname. This is A22 with Birch Brothers 34-seat bodywork, the exact identity of the vehicle is unknown, although probably one of the 1906 intake. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

1919

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| K1-3 | IT253-55 | Tilling-Stevens | ?? | Birch | Ch?? |
| K4-6 | IT288-90 | Tilling-Stevens | ?? | Birch | Ch?? |
| K7 | IT268 | Leyland | ?? | Birch | C26?D |

K1-K7 ex-War Department.
Withdrawn **unknown** (K1-K7).

1924

| | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| B1-2 | XW6188-89 | Leyland LB5 | 13134/33 | Birch | 026/22R0 |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|

No. B2 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered L54).
Withdrawn **1931** (B1).

1925

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| B3 | XX5044 | Leyland LB5 | 13226 | Birch | 026/22R0 |
| B4 | XX5043 | Leyland LB5 | 13228 | Birch | 026/22R0 |
| B5 | XX7447 | Leyland LB5 | 13306 | Birch | 026/22R0 |
| B6 | YL2136 | Leyland LB5 | 13309 | Birch | 026/22R0 |

Withdrawn **1931** (B3-B6).



K7 (IT268) was a 1919 purchase from the War Department. It sports Birch Brothers coachwork on a Leyland chassis. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

1927

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| B7 | YH6292 | Leyland LB5 | 13809 | Birch | 026/22R0 |
| B8 | YT6958 | Dennis E | 17221 | Birch | B30R |
| B9-12 | YU1015-18 | Dennis E | 17224/29-31 | Birch | B30R |
| B13 | YU8159 | Dennis E | 17234 | Birch | B30R |
| K8-9 | LX8658-59 | Leyland S5 | 10126/42 | Birch | Ch28 |

Nos. B7-B13 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered L55, DE29-34 respectively).

No. K8-9 ex-Birch Bros. lorries (re-bodied May 1927).

Withdrawn **1932** (K8), **1933** (K9).

1928

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| B14-15 | UC1945-46 | Dennis E | 17439/56 | Birch | B30R |
| B16 | UC8332 | Dennis E | 17386 | Birch | B30R |
| B17 | YV1227 | Dennis E | 17401 | Birch | B30R |
| B18 | XX1514 | Daimler Y | 6080 | Hickman | 042R0 |
| B19 | YX4400 | Leyland PLSC3 | 47196 | Birch | B32R |
| B20 | XV1153 | Leyland PLSC3 | 47152 | Birch | B32R |
| B21 | XP435 | Leyland LB2 | 12641 | Dodson | 048R0 |
| B22 | XT4608 | Leyland LB4 | 12716 | Dodson | 048R0 |
| K10 | YV1228 | Leyland PLSC3 | 46382 | Birch | C30R |
| K11 | YV5499 | Leyland PLSC | 46384 | Birch | C24R |
| K12 | YW2793 | Leyland PLSC3 | 46383 | Birch | C30R |
| K13-14 | YV5210-11 | Albion PJ26 | 5062K/62L | Birch | C26D |

Nos. B14-17 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered DE35-38 respectively).

No. B18 ex-Ingarfield & Bright, London (new 1925).

Nos. B19-20 converted to coaches as C30R; re-numbered K29-30 respectively in 1932.

Nos. B21-22 ex-Drake & McCowen, London (new 1923, 1924 respectively).

Nos. K10-14 re-numbered K25-27, K31-32 respectively in 1932.

Withdrawn **1929** (B18), **1930** (B21-22), **1934** (K11[K26], K13-14[K31-32]), **1935** (K10[K25], K12[K27], B19-20[K29-30]).



B17 (YV1227) was a 1928 Dennis E with Birch Brothers 30-seat bodywork. It passed to London Transport in 1934 where it was numbered DE38. (LTHL collection).

1929

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------------|----------|------------|----------|
| B23 | UL1966 | Dennis E | 17584 | Birch | B30R |
| B24 | UL4420 | Dennis E | 17606 | Birch | B30R |
| B25 | GU977 | Dennis H | 90061 | Birch | H28/26RO |
| B26 | GU6436 | Dennis H | 90064 | Birch | H28/26RO |
| B27 | UC1817 | Maudslay ML3 | 4029 | Hall Lewis | B32R |
| B28 | UC1816 | Maudslay ML3 | 4030 | Hall Lewis | B32R |
| K15-16 | UL1964-65 | Leyland PLC1 | 47618-19 | Birch | C24R |
| K17-18 | UL4418-19 | Leyland PLC1 | 47621-22 | Birch | C24R |
| K19-20 | GU2972-73 | Gilford 1660T | 10675/41 | Birch | C30D |
| K21-22 | UU1463-64 | Gilford 1660T | 10713/73 | Birch | C30D |
| K23-24 | UU1465-66 | Gilford 1660T | 10828/35 | Birch | C30D |

Nos. B23-26 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered DE39-40, DH10-11 respectively).

Nos. B27-28 ex-Brown, London (new 1928); re-seated to B30R in 1929.

Withdrawn **1931** (B27-28), **1935** (K15-16), **1936** (K22, K24), **1937** (K17), **1940** (K19, K21), **by 1941** (K18), **1945** (K20, K23).

1930

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| B29 | GK6431 | Leyland TD1 | 71492 | Birch | H30/26RO |
| B30 | GK8660 | Leyland TD1 | 71764 | Birch | H30/26RO |

Nos. B29-30 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD74-75 respectively).

1931

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| B31 | GK9718 | Leyland TD1 | 71765 | Birch | H30/26RO |
| B32-33 | GN4380-81 | Leyland TD1 | 71768/873 | Birch | H30/26RO |
| B34-35 | GN5880-81 | Leyland TD1 | 71791/69 | Birch | H30/26RO |
| B36-37 | G01525-26 | Leyland TD1 | 71770-71 | Birch | H30/26RO |
| B38 | GP7289 | Leyland TD1 | 72214 | Birch | H30/26RO |

Nos. B31-38 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD76-83 respectively).



B29 (GK6431), a 1930 Leyland TD1 with Birch Brothers 56-seat bodywork. It passed to London Transport in 1934 where it became TD74. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

1932

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| B39-40 | GX131-132 | Leyland TD2 | 868-69 | Birch | H30/26R |
| K28 | YW6778 | Leyland PLSC3 | 47195 | ?? | C30? |
| K33 | MT5714 | Gilford 1660T | 10681 | ?? | C32? |
| K34 | MY9115 | Gilford 1660T | 11003 | ?? | C32? |
| K35 | MY7225 | Gilford 1660T | 11221 | ?? | C32? |

Nos. B39-40 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD85, TD84 respectively).

No. K28 ex-St. Albans & District (new 1928).

Nos. K33-35 ex-Beaumont Safeway Coaches, Enfield (new 1929, 1929 and 1930 respectively); K35 re-numbered K25 by 1938.

Withdrawn **1935** (K28, K33), **1936** (K34), **by 1941** (K35[K25]).

1934

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| K36-39 | AYH295-98 | Leyland LT5A | 4492-95 | Birch | FC39C |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|

Withdrawn **1946** (K36-39).



B40 (GX132), a 1932 Leyland TD2 with Birch Brothers 56-seat bodywork. It also passed to London Transport in 1934 where it became TD84. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

1935

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| K40-42 | BL0973-75 | Leyland | LT7 | 6555/54/51 | Birch | FC39C |
| K43-45 | BL0976-78 | Leyland | LT7 | 6552-53/56 | Birch | FC39C |
| K46-49 | CLA102-05 | Leyland | LT7 | 8913/12/14-15 | Birch | FC39C |

No. K40 re-bodied by Birch in 1947.

Nos. K41, K43 fitted with Duple C35F bodies from Nos. K61, K63 respectively in 1949 and 1950 respectively. The Birch body from K43 was fitted to K62.

No. K42 was rebuilt by Birch to L48F in 1944 and re-numbered K142.

No. K44 was fitted with an ECW B35R body (from unknown source) c.1951.

Nos. K45-49 fitted with ECW B35R bodies from K81-85 in 1949. The body from K49 was fitted to K63.

Nos. K48-49 fitted with Thurgood C35F bodies from K96-97 in 1952 for disposal. The ECW B35R bodies from K48-49 were fitted to K96-97.

Withdrawn **1951** (K41, K42[K142], K43), **1952** (K40, K48-49), **1954** (K44-47).



K44 (BL0977), was a 1935 Leyland LT7 and is seen here with an ECW 35-seat body fitted c. 1951. It was withdrawn in 1954. (LTHL collection).



K46 (CLA102) was another 1935 Leyland LT7 re-bodied with an ECW 35-seat bus body in 1949, but with a lower destination box. (LTHL collection).

1936

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| K50 | CYU406 | Leyland TS7T | 11168 | Birch | FC43C |
| K51 | CYY192 | Leyland TS7T | 11167 | Birch | FC43C |

Nos. K50-51 re-bodied by Birch to H34/30R in 1943 and re-numbered K150-151 respectively.

Withdrawn **1951** (K50[K150]), **1952** (K51[K151]).

1937

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| K52-53 | DXE872-73 | Leyland TS7D | 12545-46 | Birch | B43F |
| K54-55 | DXV175-76 | Leyland TS7D | 12548/47 | Birch | B43F |

Nos. K52, K55 re-bodied by Birch to H34/30R in 1943/44 and re-numbered K152-153 respectively.

Withdrawn **1951** (K52[K152], K53, K55[K153]), **1952** (K54).



K50 (CYU406), a 1936 Leyland TS7T with Birch Brothers 43-seat full front coachwork. It was re-bodied by Birch in 1943 as a 64-seat double-decker and re-numbered K150. It was withdrawn in this form in 1951. (LTHL collection).

1938

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------|-------|
| K9 | MJ2985 | Ford BB | 5250289 | Thurgood | B20F |
| K10 | EU4724 | Ford AA | 4792974 | ?? | B20F |
| K11 | MJ5264 | Ford BB | 5317917 | Thurgood | B20F |
| K12 | ATM274 | Ford BB | 3010968 | Thurgood | FB26F |
| K15 | MT2702 | Gilford 166SD | 10541 | ?? | C25R |
| K16 | PG8380 | AJS Commodore | ?? | ?? | ?30? |
| K17 | UL9372 | Gilford 1660T | 10589 | Thurgood | C31R |
| K18 | MT2933 | Gilford 1660T | 10572 | ?? | C32R |
| K27 | NV5107 | Commer B3 | 59013 | ?? | FC26F |
| K28 | VC6112 | Maudslay ML7A | 4799 | ?? | B30? |
| K30 | MJ4825 | Dennis Ace | 200206 | ?? | B20F |
| K31 | MJ2699 | Dennis Lancet | 170431 | ?? | B32? |
| K32 | BNM410 | Dennis Lancet II | 175328 | ?? | B39? |
| K35 | VD3510 | Leyland LT5A | 4248 | Leyland | B32R |
| K56 | CUC104 | Bedford WTB | 110251 | ?? | B26R |
| K57 | EXA822 | Bedford WTB | 111823 | Birch | C25F |
| K58 | EXF26 | Bedford WTB | 111762 | Birch | C25F |
| K59 | NV8311 | Bedford WTB | 110893 | ?? | C26F |
| K60 | NV3606 | Leyland SKP | 2695 | Burlingham | C26F |
| K61-62 | EX0694-95 | Leyland LZ2A | 200179/51 | Birch | C36F |
| K63-65 | EXX990-92 | Leyland LZ2A | 200211/42/12 | Birch | C36F |
| K66 | EXX993 | Leyland LZ2A | 200180 | Birch | C36F |

1938 (continued)

Nos. K9, K11-12 ex-Sunbeam, Gravenhurst (new 1933, 1934, 1936 respectively).

Nos. K10, K17 ex-Whitwell Bus Company, Whitwell (new 1931, 1929 respectively).

Nos. K16, K28 ex-Swallow Omnibus Company, Kempston (both new 1930).

Nos. K15, K18 ex-Pirton Belle, Pirton (new 1929).

No. K27 ex-Robinson, Rushden (new 1935).

Nos. K30-32, K56 ex-Perseverance, Shillington (new 1934, 1933, 1937, 1936 respectively).

No. K35 ex-Lanarkshire Traction Company (No. F114, new 1934); fitted with Duple C35F body from K62 in 1949; re-numbered K42 at the same time.

Nos. K57-58 re-seated to C26F at a later date.

No. K59 ex-Abbott & Sons, Rushden (new 1937).

No. K60 ex-Scroxtton, Rushden (new 1934).

Nos. K61-63 re-bodied to C35F by Duple in 1946; these bodies were fitted to K41-43 in 1949 being replaced with the bodies from K35[K42], K43-44 for disposal.

Withdrawn **1938** (K16), **1939** (K9-11, K15, K17-18), **1944** (K30), **1945** (K28, K31), **1946** (K12, K27, K32, K56, K60), **1948** (K59), **1949** (K57-58, K61-62, K64, K66), **1950** (K63, K65), **1951** (K35[K42]).

1938 (continued)

The following vehicles were also acquired in 1938 from operators taken over. Most were not operated, but some may have entered service for a short while. None received Birch Brothers fleet numbers.

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------------|---------|----------|------|
| - | EW6507 | Gilford CP6 | 10775 | Eaton | B20F |
| - | MY9869 | GMC T60 | 60917 | ?? | C26? |
| - | NH5868 | Reo | ?? | ?? | B14? |
| - | TM4736 | Ford AA | 3731081 | ?? | B20F |
| - | TM9630 | Ford AA | 4792070 | Thurgood | B20F |
| - | UR6614 | Ford AA | 3013592 | Thurgood | B20F |
| - | VC348 | Chevrolet LQ | 52446 | ?? | C14F |
| - | VX1448 | Chevrolet LQ | 56006 | ?? | B14? |
| - | W04600 | Chevrolet | ?? | ?? | B14? |

MY9869, NH5868, W04600 ex-Pirton Belle, Pirton (new 1929, 1924, 1930 respectively).

TM4736 ex-Twydell, Shillington (new 1930).

TM9630 ex-Sunbeam, Gravenhurst (new 1931).

EW6507, VC348 ex-Swallow Omnibus Company, Kempston (new 1930, 1929 respectively).

UR6614, VX1448 ex-Whitwell Bus Company, Whitwell (new 1930, 1929 respectively). All were withdrawn in 1938.



K58 (EXF26), a 1938 Bedford WTB with Birch 25-seat coachwork. It remained in service until 1949. (LTHL collection).

1940

| | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| K170 | GGT184 | Leyland TD7 | 306839 | Birch | L27/28R |
| K171 | GGK328 | Leyland TD7 | 306840 | Birch | L27/28R |

No. K170 re-bodied to L27/26R by Barnard in 1949 after being damaged by fire in 1946.

Withdrawn **1949** (K171), **1960** (K170).

1945

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| K34 | HE6329 | Leyland LT5A | 4049 | Roe | B32F |
| K101-103 | GYL981-83 | Guy Arab II | FD27533/30/50 | Weymann | L27/28R |
| K104 | GYL184 | Guy Arab II | FD27563 | Weymann | L27/28R |

No. K34 ex-Yorkshire Traction (No. 416, new 1934); fitted with ECW B35R body from K80 in 1949.

Withdrawn **1951** (K34, K101-104).



K170 (CGT184) was a 1940 Leyland TD7 originally with Birch Brothers own bodywork but re-bodied by Barnard in 1949 which enabled it to survive in the fleet until 1960. (LTHL collection).

1946

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| K80 | HUW780 | Leyland PS1 | 461045 | ECW | B35R |
| K180-184 | HLY480-84 | Leyland PD1 | 460441-42 | Birch | L28/25F |
| | | Leyland PD1 | 51836/60694 | Birch | L28/25F |
| | | Leyland PD1 | 60695/1045 | Birch | L28/25F |

No. K80 re-bodied to C33F by Windover in 1949.

Nos. K180-183 re-bodied to H30/26R by MCCW in 1956 or 1957 (K182).

Withdrawn **1957** (K184), 1958 (K80), **1965** (K180, K183), **1966** (K181), **1967** (K182).

1947

| | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| K20-21 | HYP720-21 | Bedford OB | 55805/61710 | Duple | C29F |
| K22-23 | HYP722-23 | Bedford OB | 47814/50760 | Duple | C29F |
| K24-25 | HYP724-25 | Bedford OB | 71412/81218 | Duple | C29F |
| K81-83 | HUW781-83 | Leyland PS1 | 462416/59/664 | ECW | B35R |
| K84-85 | HUW784-85 | Leyland PS1 | 462985/3043 | ECW | B35R |
| K185-187 | HLY485-87 | Leyland PD1 | 460822/696/827 | Birch | L28/25F |
| K188-189 | HLY488-89 | Leyland PD1 | 460826/28 | Birch | L28/25F |

Nos. K81-85 re-bodied to C33F by Windover in 1949.

Nos. K187-189 re-bodied to H30/26R by MCCW in 1956 (K189) and 1957.

Withdrawn **1949** (K20), **1950** (K21-25), **1956** (K82-83), **1957** (K81, K84-85), **1958** (K185-186), **1966** (K189), **1967** (K187-188).

1948

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|----------|-------|
| K90-92 | JXT490-92 | Leyland PS1/1 | 481867/997/2502 | ECW | FC31R |
| K93-95 | JXT493-95 | Leyland PS1/1 | 482621/70-1 | ECW | FC31R |
| K96-97 | JXT496-97 | Leyland PS1/1 | 482013/3104 | Thurgood | C35F |

Nos. K96-97 fitted with ECW B35R bodies from K48-49 in 1952.

Withdrawn **1954** (K96-97), **1958** (K90-91, K95), **1959** (K92-94).



K90 (JXT490) was a 1948 Leyland PS1/1 with ECW 31-seat full-front coachwork. (LTHL collection).

1949

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| K26 | KGT426 | Bedford OB | 99998 | Duple | C29F |
| K70 | KXU670 | Leyland CP01 | 490039 | Windover | C32F |
| K98-99 | JXT498-99 | Leyland PS1/1 | 493295/5572 | Windover | C35F |

No. K70 re-seated to C34F at a later date.
Withdrawn **1950** (K26), **1957** (K98-99), **1961** (K70).

1950

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| K71-73 | KXU671-73 | Leyland CP01 | 493846/655/800 | Windover | C32F |
| K74-75 | KXU674-75 | Leyland CP01 | 493663/874 | Windover | C32F |

Nos. K71-75 re-seated to C34F at a later date.
Withdrawn **1955** (K75), **1956** (K73), **1960** (K74), **1962** (K71-72).



K71 (KXU671), a 1950 Leyland CP01 Comet with Windover 32-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

1951

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|---------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| K20-21 | LXM20-21 | Leyland | PSU1/13 | 501537/618 | Windover | C39C |
| K22-23 | LXM22-23 | Leyland | PSU1/13 | 510752/1424 | Windover | C39C |
| K24-25 | LXM24-25 | Leyland | PSU1/13 | 511426-27 | Windover | C39C |
| K26 | MLF726 | Leyland | PSU1/13 | 511425 | Windover | C39F |
| K210-212 | LXV210-12 | Guy Arab | III | FD70060/40/56 | Willowbrook | FH27/26F |
| K213-215 | LXV213-15 | Guy Arab | III | FD70059/70/354 | Willowbrook | FH27/26F |
| K220 | LXV220 | Leyland | PD1A | 494838 | Willowbrook | FH27/26F |
| K221-223 | LXV221-23 | Leyland | PS1/4 | 504555-57 | Willowbrook | FH27/26F |

Nos. K210-215 carried the names John Churchill, Charles Churchill, William Cadogan, Adam de Cordonnel, Sidney Godolphin, Prince Eugene respectively.

K220-223 carried the names Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenards, Malplaquet respectively.

Withdrawn **1960** (K220-223), **1961** (K22-24, K26), **1962** (K20-21, K25, K210, K214), **1963** (K211-213, K215).



K210 (LXV210), a 1951 Guy Arab III with Willowbrook full-front 53-seat bodywork. It carried the name John Churchill. (LTHL collection).

1952

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| K12 | PKL812 | Leyland-Beadle | JCB318 | Beadle | C35F |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|

No. K12 ex-Beadle demonstrator, constructed from Leyland units ex-K171 (GGK328).

Withdrawn **1957** (K12).

1954

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| K30 | PLA830 | AEC Reliance | MU3RV273 | Park Royal | C41C |
| K160 | EFJ235 | Leyland TD5 | 300633 | Leyland | H29/26R |
| K161-162 | EFJ161-62 | Leyland TD5 | 300333-34 | Leyland | H29/26R |
| K163 | EFJ236 | Leyland TD5 | 300634 | Leyland | H29/26R |

Nos. K160-163 ex-Exeter Corporation (Nos. 20, 61-62, 21 respectively, all new 1938).

Withdrawn **1955** (K161-163), **1957** (K160), **1966** (K30).

1955

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| K60-65 | PYK60-65 | Beadle-Commer | TS3 JCB641-46 | Beadle | C41F |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|

Withdrawn **1964** (K60, K62-65), **1966** (K61).



K30 (PLA830), was a solitary AEC Reliance dating from 1954. It carried Park Royal 41-seat centre-entrance coachwork. (LTHL collection).



K61 (PYK61) was one of 6 Beadle-Commer TS3 rebuilds purchased in 1955 - it carried Beadle 41-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

1956

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------|------|
| K31-33 | RYT31-33 | AEC Reliance | MU3RV746-48 | Weymann | C41F |
| K34-36 | RYT34-36 | AEC Reliance | MU3RV1158-60 | Weymann | C41F |
| K66 | SLP10 | Beadle-Commer | TS3 JCB699 | Beadle | C41F |

Withdrawn **1963** (K35), **1965** (K66), **1966** (K31-34, K36).

1958

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------|------|
| K10 | UYW10 | Bedford SB8 | 62099 | Duple | C37F |
| K40-41 | UYT40-41 | AEC Reliance | MU3RV1020-21 | Park Royal | B45F |
| K67 | TKT933 | Beadle-Commer | TS3 JCB376 | Beadle | C41F |

No. K10 re-seated to C36F at a later date.

No. K67 ex-Beadle demonstrator.

Withdrawn **1959** (K67), **1967** (K10), **1969** (K40-41).

1959

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| K11-12 | WJJ11-12 | Bedford SB8 | 67161/77 | Duple | C41F |
| K42 | WLW42 | AEC Reliance | 2MU3RV2452 | Park Royal | B45F |
| K50-52 | WXR50-52 | Leyland PSUC1/2 | 594436-37/44 | Willowbrook | C41F |

Nos. K11-12 re-seated to C36F at a later date.

Withdrawn **1967** (K11), **1968** (K12), **1969** (K42, K50-52).

1960

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|--------------|---------------|-------------|------|
| K13-15 | YYT13-15 | Bedford SB1 | 79470/96/500 | Duple | C41F |
| K16-18 | YYT16-18 | Bedford SB1 | 79572/612/888 | Duple | C41F |
| K43 | YYX43 | AEC Reliance | 2MU3RA2457 | Duple | C43F |
| K44 | 44AUW | AEC Reliance | 2MU3RA2422 | Willowbrook | C41F |

Withdrawn **1969** (K13-18), **1970** (K43-44).

1961

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------|--------------|---------------|-------------|------|
| K45-48 | 45-48AUW | AEC Reliance | 2MU3RA3606-09 | Willowbrook | C41F |
| K80-81 | 80-81CYV | Leyland L2 | 602898-99 | Duple | C41F |

Withdrawn **1970** (K45-48, K80-81).



K18 (YYT18), a 1960 Bedford SB1 with Duple 41-seat bodywork - one of six similar vehicles entering service that year. All were withdrawn in 1969. (LTHL collection).



K80 (80CYV), a 1961 Leyland L2 Leopard with Duple Britannia 41-seat bodywork. (LTHL collection).

1962

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| K19-20 | 19-20ELH | Bedford SB8 | 88949/72 | Duple | C41F |
| K82-84 | 82-84CYV | Leyland PSU3/3R | 620832-33/51 | Willowbrook | DP51F |

No. K84 re-bodied to DP51F by Plaxton in 1969.
Withdrawn **1969** (K19-20, K82-84).

1963

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| K90-95 | 90-95FXD | Leyland PSU3/4R | 629751-56 | Park Royal | C49F |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|

Withdrawn **1969** (K90-95).

1964

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| K25-29 | ALD25-29B | AEC Reliance | 2MU4RA5406-10 | Harrington | C41F |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|

Withdrawn **1971** (K25-29).

1965

K70-73 DUC70-73C Leyland PSU3/4R L40097-100 Marshall C49F

Withdrawn **1969** (K70-73).

1966

K6M-7M FML517-18B Bedford SB13 94773/494 Duple C41F
K8M JNK687C Bedford SB5 95561 Duple C41F
K9M EAA168D Bedford VAM14 6806547 Duple C45F
K21-22 KHM21-22D Bedford VAL14 6824192/6822 Duple C45F
K23-24 KHM23-24D Bedford VAL14 687886/9120 Duple C45F

Nos. K6M-K9M ex-Monico Motorways (new 1964, 1964, 1965, 1966 respectively).
Withdrawn **1970** (K6M-K9M), **1971** (K21-24).

1967

K30-31 NYM30-31E Bedford VAM14 7802669/3286 Plaxton C45F

Withdrawn **1971** (K30-31).



In 1966 Birch Brothers purchased 4 Bedford VAL14 chassis with Duple 45-seat coachwork. This is K22 (KHM22D), retained for the coaching side of the business until 1971 when it was disposed of. (LTHL collection).

1969

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|
| K35-38 | VL35-38G | Bedford VAM70 | 457139/62775 | Plaxton | C45F |
| K37-38 | VL37-38G | Bedford VAM70 | 62783/935 | Plaxton | C45F |

Nos. K35-38 to George Ewer Group 2/71.

1970

| | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| K60-64 | BUL60-64H | Seddon Pennine IV | 47296-300 | Plaxton | C45F |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|

Nos. K60-64 to George Ewer Group 2/71.

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In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following publications: Buses Illustrated Nos. 11, 12 (July, October 1952) by John Manley Birch; PSV Circle Fleet History PN3, 1980.

Photographs courtesy John Boylett (courtesy John Kaye) and Brian Townsend.

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