

Bedwas & Machen UDC



1922 - 1974

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Cover Illustration: 1957 AEC Regent V No. 10 (RAX583) with Massey bodywork.

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Bedwas & Machen UDC 1922-1974

Bedwas and Machen were two small coal mining villages situated (until Local Government re-organisation in 1974) in Monmouthshire, and thus technically within the national boundary of England, although most of the inhabitants would have regarded themselves as Welsh, especially as the border with Wales ran along the River Rhymney, just a few hundred yards away. As befits an undertaking that was once the smallest municipal fleet in Britain, the history is uncomplicated.

Although the UDC was never involved in the provision of tramways, buses were introduced at the end of the First World War, when three Straker-Squire single-deckers were purchased in 1922 for use on the Caerphilly to Trethomas service, which commenced on 12th January 1922. In March 1922, Caerphilly UDC itself began to run jointly on the service, although there was continual disagreement between the parties over timetabling. In the first year of operation over 195,000 passengers were carried and the UDC made a profit of £295. The numbers of passengers carried peaked in the 1960's at over 1 million per annum, but from there, in common with most operators, the numbers subsequently began to decline.

A livery of powder blue and white was chosen for the new vehicles and although the white later became cream the basic colours remained unchanged throughout the life of the undertaking. From 1924 the Omnibus Department fell under the control of the Council's Engineer and Surveyor, but by 1950, with the increase in revenue, a General Manager, Mr. G. Coleman, was appointed.

Bedwas & Machen UDC 1922-1974

Although South Wales Transport had proposed a bus service as early as 1914, it never materialised and until the commencement of the UDC operation only one other operator, Beavis of Risca, ran a service in the area. Beavis (by now trading as the Danygraig Omnibus Service) was taken over by Western Welsh in 1935 and his Newport to Machen service was included in the deal.

In 1930, Caerphilly UDC handed over the running of their share of the route from Caerphilly to Trethomas to the Western Welsh Company with whom Bedwas and Machen had hoped to run jointly. However, for some inexplicable reason, the newly created Traffic Commissioners refused the application, and the route was run separately by each concern until 1954, when consent to run jointly was given. During this decade the fleet size dwindled to three vehicles and made Bedwas and Machen the smallest municipal fleet in Britain.

In 1943 the entire three-vehicle fleet was destroyed in a blaze at the depot and services had to be maintained by Caerphilly UDC until May 1943, when a fleet of Bedford OWB's resumed the service. Interestingly Bedwas and Machen were able to return the favour just twelve months later when Caerphilly UDC also suffered a fire.

Bedwas & Machen UDC 1922-1974

Up until 1947 the fleet had consisted solely of single-deck vehicles, but in November of that year the first double-deck vehicles, a pair of ex-Wigan Corporation TD1's, were acquired.

Throughout the 1950's, the area became a favourite with commuters working in nearby Newport and Cardiff, but there was no major change to the Trethomas bus service until 1967, when it was extended to Bargoed, jointly with Western Welsh.

In the late 1960's the development of the large Graig-y-Rhacca housing estate between Bedwas and Machen resulted in the council starting a second route from Caerphilly to Graig-y-Rhacca via Llanfabon Drive. This was known as the 'back route' locally. A further service from Graig-y-Rhacca to the Pantglas Industrial Estate in Bedwas commenced in 1971.

In August 1968, a joint service with Western Welsh, Red & White Motor Services and Gelligaer UDC between Rhymney Bridge and Newport was inaugurated. A notable addition to the fleet in this year was Leyland PD3/4 PAX466F, the last exposed radiator bus in South Wales (although technically until 1974 the UDC was still in England!) and the last side-gangway lowbridge bus built in Britain.

Bedwas & Machen UDC 1922-1974

On the 1st April 1974, under Local Government re-organisation, Bedwas and Machen became part of the Rhymney Valley District Council in the new Welsh County of Gwent. The fleet was subsequently merged with the fleets of the neighbouring municipalities of Caerphilly and Gelligaer UDC's to form the Rhymney Valley District Council fleet, thus marking the end of over 50 years of Bedwas and Machen UDC Omnibus Department.

Bus Fleet List 1922-1974

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

1922

- ; **AX3860-3861; Straker-Squire A; ? ; ? ; B32R**

Withdrawn 1930

1923

- ; **AX5483; Karrier H; ? ; ? ; B33F**

Withdrawn 1926

1924

- ; **AX6648; Straker-Squire A; ? ; ? ; B32R**

Withdrawn 1930

1926

- ; **AX9157; Karrier KL; ? ; ? ; B39F**

Withdrawn 1931

1930

- ; **HS4281; Albion PJ2; 65005H; ? ; B25F**

- ; **HS4284; Albion PJ2; 65005K; ? ; B25F**

- ; **TY3841; Gilford LL15; 10249; ? ; B26F**

- ; **YN3799; AEC NS; 23909; LGOC; B30R**

HS4281/4284 ex-Albion, Scotstoun. New 1926.

HS4284 re-seated to B20F in 1932.

TY3841 ex-United AS (No. B29). New 1927.

YN3799 ex-LGOC (No. NS1738). New 1926.

Withdrawn 1932 (HS4281), 1933 (YN3799), 1934 (HS4284), 1935 (TY3841).

1932

- ; **WO6266; Albion PW6; 516011A; Park Royal; B32R**

Destroyed by fire 2/1943.

1933

- ; **WO6969; Albion PW6; 516025F; Park Royal; B32R**

Destroyed by fire 2/1943.

1936

- ; **AAx785; Albion PW6; 916411K; ? ; B32R**

Destroyed by fire 2/1943.

1943

- ; **EWO406; Bedford OWB; 12834; Duple; B32F**
- 3***; **EWO544; Bedford OWB; 14443; Duple; B32F**
- ; **EWO574; Bedford OWB; 14661; Duple; B32F**

*EWO544 was not numbered until 1951.

EWO406/544 later re-seated to B28F.

Withdrawn 1950 (EWO406, EWO574), 1954 (3).

1944

- ; **EWO924; Bedford OWB; 20070; Duple; B32F**

Withdrawn 1950.

1947

- 1***; **EK7912; Leyland TD1; 71792; Leyland; L24/24R**
- ; **EK7913; Leyland TD1; 71793; Leyland; L24/24R**
- 2***; **EWO380; Bedford OWB; 11453; Duple; B32F**

*EK7912 and EWO380 were not numbered until 1951.
EK7912/7913 ex-Wigan Corporation (Nos. 44/45). New 1930.
EWO380 ex-Ralphs Services, Abertillery (No. 80). New 1943.
Withdrawn 1950 (EK7913), 1951 (1), 1956 (2).

1948

4*; GWO482; Albion CX1; 960029B; Welsh Metal Industries; L31/26R
5*; HAX340; Albion CX1; 960040L; Welsh Metal Industries; L31/26R

*GWO482 and HAX340 were not numbered until 1951.
Withdrawn 1959 (4), 1961 (5).

1951

6-7; JWO354-355; AEC Regal III; 9621A854/53; Bruce; B35R

Bruce bodies built on East Lancashire frames (Nos. 4725/24).
Withdrawn 1967 (6), 1971 (7).

Bedwas & Machen UDC 1922-1974



Bedwas & Machen No. 5 (HAX340) was a 1948 Albion CX1 with Welsh Metal Industries 57-seat lowbridge bodywork. It was withdrawn in 1961.



AEC Regal III No. 7 (JWO355) with Bruce 35-seat rear-entrance bodywork was added to the fleet in 1951. It remained in the fleet for 20 years before finally being withdrawn in 1971. It is now in preservation.

1952

8; KWO216; AEC Regent III; 9613A1649; Northern Counties; H30/26R

Withdrawn 1964.

1956

9; PWO783; AEC Regent V; MD3RV173; Longwell Green; L27/28R

Re-seated to L29/28R after delivery and to L31/28R by 1962.

Withdrawn 1968.

1957

10; RAX583; AEC Regent V; MD3RV461; Massey; L29/28R

Withdrawn 1973.

1959

11; UWO498; AEC Regent V; MD3RV498; Massey; L31/28R

To Rhymney Valley District Council (RVDC) 4/74 (re-numbered 98).

1961

5; 422CAX; AEC Regent V; MD3RV565; Massey; L31/28R

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 91).

1964

8; BWO585B; AEC Regent V; 2MD3RA609; Massey; L31/28R

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 92).

1968

6; PAX466F; Leyland PD3/4; 703981; Massey; L35/33RD

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 96).

1971

7; YWO121J; Leyland PSU3B/2R; 7100016; Northern Counties; B53F

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 97).

1972

9; GAX423L; Leyland PSU3B/2R; 7203145; Willowbrook; B53F

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 93).

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1968 Leyland PD3/4 No. 6 (PAX466F) was the very last exposed radiator bus in South Wales and the very last side-gangway lowbridge bus built in Britain. It passed to Rhymney Valley District Council in 1974 as their No. 96 and subsequently into preservation.

1973

10-11; OAX74-75M; Leyland PSU3B/2R; 7302535/3991; East Lancs; B51F

To RVDC 4/74 (re-numbered 94/95).



No. 8 (KWO216) a 1951 AEC Regent III with Northern Counties bodywork.



No. 9 (PW0783) a 1956 AEC Regent V looking more like a Regent III with its exposed radiator.



1972 Leyland PSU3B/2R No. 9 (GAX423L) with Willowbrook B53F bodywork. It became No. 93 in the Rhymney Valley District fleet in 1974.