

# Bedwas & Machen UDC



1922 - 1974

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Cover Illustration: 1959 AEC Regent V No. 11 (UW0498) with Massey bodywork at Caerphilly 1964. (John Huddleston).

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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 12 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 number 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.

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.

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.

On the 1 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 - Year into service; Fleet No; Reg. No; Chassis; Chassis No; Body; Seating.

### 1922

- AX3860-61 Straker-Squire A      ??      ??      B32R

Withdrawn 1930 (AX3860-61).

### 1923

- AX5483      Karrier H      ??      ??      B33F

Withdrawn 1926 (AX5483).

### 1924

- AX6648      Straker-Squire A      ??      ??      B32R

Withdrawn 1930 (AX6648).

**1926**

-	<b>AX9157</b>	<b>Karrier KL</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>B39F</b>
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Withdrawn **1931** (AX9157).

**1930**

-	<b>HS4281</b>	<b>Albion PJ2</b>	<b>65005H</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>B25F</b>
-	<b>HS4284</b>	<b>Albion PJ2</b>	<b>65005K</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>B25F</b>
-	<b>TY3841</b>	<b>Gilford LL15</b>	<b>10249</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>B26F</b>
-	<b>YN3799</b>	<b>AEC NS</b>	<b>23909</b>	<b>LGOC</b>	<b>B30R</b>

HS4281, HS4284 ex-Albion, Scotstoun; new 1926; HS4284 re-seated to B20F in 1932.

TY3841 ex-United Automobile Services (No. B29); new 1927.

YN3799 ex-LGOC (No. NS1738); new 1926.

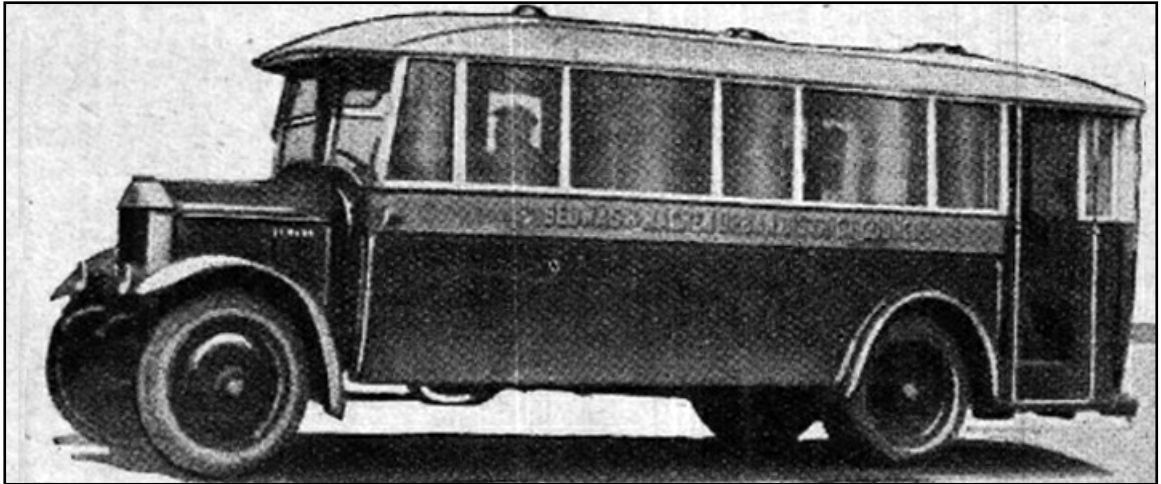
Withdrawn **1932** (HS4281), **1933** (YN3799), **1934** (HS4284), **1935** (TY3841).

**1932**

-	<b>W06266</b>	<b>Albion PW6</b>	<b>516011A</b>	<b>Park Royal</b>	<b>B32R</b>
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W06266 destroyed by fire 2/43.





One of the two Albion PJ2's with 25-seat bodywork by an unknown coachbuilder that were formerly Albion demonstrators. (Commercial Motor Archive).

**1933**

- **W06969**      **Albion PW6**                      **516025F**                      **Park Royal**      **B32R**

W06969 destroyed by fire 2/43.

**1936**

- **AAX785**      **Albion PW6**                      **916411K**                      **??**                      **B32R**

AAX785 destroyed by fire 2/43.

**1943**

- **EW0406**      **Bedford OWB**                      **12834**                      **Duple**                      **B32F**  
- **EW0544**      **Bedford OWB**                      **14443**                      **Duple**                      **B32F**  
- **EW0574**      **Bedford OWB**                      **14661**                      **Duple**                      **B32F**

EW0544 numbered 3 in 1951.

EW0406/544 later re-seated to B28F.

Withdrawn **1950** (EW0406, EW0574), **1954** (EW0544[3]).

**1944**

-	<b>EW0924</b>	<b>Bedford OWB</b>	<b>20070</b>	<b>Duple</b>	<b>B32F</b>
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Withdrawn **1950** (EW0924).

**1947**

-	<b>EK7912-13</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71792-93</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>L24/24R</b>
-	<b>EW0380</b>	<b>Bedford OWB</b>	<b>11453</b>	<b>Duple</b>	<b>B32F</b>

EK7912, EW0380 numbered 1, 2 respectively in 1951.

EK7912-13 ex-Wigan Corporation (Nos. 44-45; new 1930).

EW0380 ex-Ralphs Services, Abertillery (No. 80; new 1943).

Withdrawn **1950** (EK7913), **1951** (EK7912[1]), **1956** (EW0380[2]).

**1948**

-	<b>GW0482</b>	<b>Albion CX1</b>	<b>960029B</b>	<b>WMI</b>	<b>L31/26R</b>
-	<b>HAX340</b>	<b>Albion CX1</b>	<b>960040L</b>	<b>WMI</b>	<b>L31/26R</b>

GW0482, HAX340 numbered 4, 5 respectively in 1951; bodies by Welsh Metal Industries.

Withdrawn **1959** (GW0482[4]), **1961** (HAX340[5]).



EK7913 was an ex-Wigan Corporation Leyland TD1 with Leyland L24/24R bodywork dating from 1930 purchased in 1947 that remained in the fleet for three years. (LTHL collection).



No. 4 (GW0482) was a 1948 Albion CX1 with Welsh Metal Industries 57-seat lowbridge bodywork. It was not numbered until 1951 and withdrawn in 1959. (LTHL collection).



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

**1951**

**6-7 JW0354-55 AEC Regal III                      9621A854/53      Bruce                      B35R**

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

**1952**

**8    KW0216      AEC Regent III                      9613A1649      NCME                      H30/26R**

Withdrawn **1964** (8).

**1956**

**9    PW0783      AEC Regent V                      MD3RV173                      Longwell Green L27/28R**

No. 9 re-seated to L29/28R after delivery and to L31/28R by 1962.  
Withdrawn **1968** (9).



AEC Regal III No. 7 (JW0355) 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. (John Kaye).





No. 8 (KW0216) was a 1952 AEC Regent III with Northern Counties 56-seat H30/26R bodywork. (LTHL collection).



No. 9 (PW0783) was a 1956 AEC Regent V with Longwell Green 55-seat lowbridge bodywork, looking more like a Regent III with its exposed radiator. (LTHL collection).

**1957**

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

Withdrawn **1973** (10).

**1959**

**11 UW0498 AEC Regent V MD3RV498 Massey L31/28R**

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

**1961**

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

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 91).

**1964**

**8 BW0585B AEC Regent V 2MD3RA609 Massey L31/28R**

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 92).



No. 10 (RAX583) was another AEC Regent V with Massey 57-seat bodywork built in 1957, it was withdrawn in 1973. (Dick Dapr ).



No. 11 (UW0498) a 1959 AEC Regent V with Massey 59-seat bodywork. It passed to Rhymney Valley District Council in 1974, where it was re-numbered 98. (LTHL collection).



No. 5 (422CAX) was yet another AEC Regent V with Massey 59-seat bodywork that arrived in 1961. It passed to Rhymney Valley District Council in 1974 as their No. 91. (LTHL collection).





What proved to be the final AEC Regent V purchased was No. 8 (BW0585B) with Massey 59-seat Lowbridge bodywork. (LTHL collection).

**1968****6      PAX466F    Leyland PD¾            703981            Massey            L35/33RD**

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 96).

**1971****7      YW0121J    Leyland PSU3B/2R    7100016            NCME            B53F**

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 97).

**1972****9      GAX423L    Leyland PSU3B/2R    7203145            Willowbrook      B53F**

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 93).

**1973****10-11 OAX74-75M Leyland PSU3B/2R    7302535/3991    East Lancs      B51F**

To Rhymney Valley District Council 4/74 (re-numbered 94/95).





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 in 1974 as their No. 96 and subsequently into preservation. (LTHL collection).



No. 7 (YW0121J) was the first single-deck bus purchased for 20 years. It was a 1971 Leyland Leopard PSU3B/2R with Northern Counties 53-seat bodywork. (LTHL collection).



Wearing its Rhymney Valley number 93 is former Bedwas & Machen No. 8 (GAX423L) a 1972 Leyland PSU3B/2R with Willowbrook 53-seat bodywork. (LTHL collection).

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*In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following publications; Municipal Buses in Colour 1954-1979, Wilson, Ian Allan, 1997; PSV Circle Fleet History PG9, 1996; additional information by David Harris [Bedwas Navigation Colliery website].*

*Photographs courtesy Commercial Motor Archive, John Huddleston, Dick Dapr  and John Kaye.*

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