

Hutchings & Cornelius Services Ltd



1934 - 1979

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Cover Illustration: 623BYA was a 1958 Dennis Loline with East Lancs H37/31R bodywork that was the flagship vehicle of the company for many years. (Cliff Essex).

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Hutchings & Cornelius Services Ltd was incorporated on 31 May 1934 and combined the two fleets of Thomas Hutchings of South Petherton, Somerset and Alf Cornelius & Sons of Barrington, another small Somerset village about 3 miles from South Petherton. Both had been operating local bus services since the mid-1920's and in the face of competition from Southern National, who had been building up their services in this corner of Somerset and buying out various independents, the two small businesses decided to merge and hopefully stave off attention from the larger company.

The initial fleet of eight vehicles, now liveried in cream with black trim, was inherited from both parties, each supplying four. The operators' two depots at South Petherton and Barrington were retained and provided accommodation for up to 14 vehicles.

Fleet numbers were used briefly but were discontinued after the War.

The new company operated bus services between Yeovil and South Petherton, Yeovil to West Chinnock and South Petherton to Taunton as well as school contracts and excursions. Apart from frequency changes these services remained unaltered after the merger until the opening of Houndstone Camp in 1939 when some journeys on the Yeovil to South Petherton service were diverted to serve it.

During World War II there was an increased demand for bus travel due to petrol rationing and Hutchings & Cornelius (H&C) buses were continually being pressed into service and frequently carried more passengers than they were licensed for. Problems also arose with the maintenance of the fleet with spare parts in short supply. The lightweight vehicles employed by H&C had their life expectancy reduced as a consequence and second-hand vehicles sourced from other operators had to be drafted in, even though they would not have been considered up to H&C's standard before the War. Staffing was also a difficulty with many personnel being called up for war service. The provision of new buses was strictly controlled but H&C received two new utility Bedford OWB's in 1943.

During the War Thomas Hutchings sold his shares in the Company to Alf Cornelius and Stanley Vincent and retired to Bournemouth. Stanley Vincent had purchased an interest in the Company when it was formed in 1934 and was a well-known local businessman with interests in the motor vehicle trade.

Following the end of the War bus services slowly resumed and the popularity of excursions and private hires continued, although as fuel became more available there was a rise in private motoring which affected loadings. With regular rises in wages and consequently increased costs for operators there was the inevitable round of fares increases which led to a decrease in passenger numbers.

A change to the Taunton route took place on 28 April 1947, which was re-routed between Fivehead and Curry Mallet to serve Isle Abbots and on 16 February 1948 an extension of the Yeovil to West Chinnock service to Crewkerne commenced.

Until the late 1940's H&C still used the antiquated Bell Punch ticket system with pre-printed tickets. This was subsequently replaced by the Bellgraphic system whereby the fare was hand written on the ticket by the conductor. This system was replaced in the mid-seventies by Setright machines.

In 1950 the fleet was bolstered by the arrival of two new and rare vehicles in the form of the Jensen JLP1 chassis with Sparshatts B40F bodywork, of which only five known examples entered public service.

The first double-deck vehicle operated by H&C arrived in 1953 and was an-ex Huddersfield Corporation Daimler CWA6 with Brush lowbridge L27/28R bodywork that had been new in 1944.

Alf Cornelius retired from the business in 1954 and his shareholding was purchased by the Vincent family who therefore took control of the company, although they retained the Hutchings & Cornelius operating name and a new livery of red and cream was introduced.

As a result of the Suez Crisis during 1957 and the threat to fuel supplies, H&C reduced the frequency on the Taunton service and withdrew the Ilminster to Yeovil service on Tuesdays and the South Petherton to Taunton service on Sundays. Also in 1957 three Dennis Lancet UF vehicles with Harrington bodywork were delivered, suitable for one-man operation, which was introduced by H&C shortly afterwards, although the last crew operated journey did not run until 1973.

In 1958 the company purchased 623BYA, a Dennis Loline I with East Lancs 68-seat bodywork, an unusual purchase for a small independent operator. It has been quoted that it was fitted with power doors to the rear entrance when delivered but photographs of it in service show an open platform. This became the company's flagship vehicle for many years afterwards.

Up until 1960 the fleet was garaged at a yard in Crown Lane, South Petherton but in this year it was moved to spare land on St James Street, which also had a small garage that could accommodate two vehicles and had been acquired by the Vincent Group.

In October 1966 H&C made a number of timetable changes which included the withdrawal of the Ilminster to Yeovil service on Mondays and the South Petherton to Ilminster service was reduced to run on Wednesday, Friday

and Saturday only. At the same time the route from South Petherton to Yeovil became mostly one-man operated.

A new bus station opened at Yeovil on 22 May 1968 and most of H&C's services now terminated there.

In common with most operators the sixties brought a continuing downturn in passenger numbers for various reasons meaning less revenue and the inevitable cuts in services. H&C's rural areas were now bringing in less income although the coaching side of the business remained profitable.

In April 1970 H&C gave notice to the Traffic Commissioners of the withdrawal of a number of services when their licence expired. These included the Ilminster - Barrington - Yeovil service; South Petherton - Barrington - Ilminster; Barrington - Curry Mallet - Taunton and South Petherton to the Westlands Factory. Although a limited Friday afternoon shopping service was subsequently provided on the services from Barrington to Ilminster and Yeovil, the remainder ceased when their licences expired. As a result Barrington depot was closed and all services now ran from South Petherton depot, which was enlarged to provide more accommodation.

In June 1973 H&C purchased a Bristol VRT with ECW H39/31F bodywork to

replace the ageing Dennis Loline purchased in 1958. This enabled the company's services to become 100% one-man operated.

Sadly Stanley Vincent passed away on 25 June 1975 leaving H&C in the hands of his sons John and Paul.

On the 6 February 1971 a trial service was introduced from Westport into Taunton via Isle Brewers, Isle Abbots and Curry Mallet making just one round trip daily. On 8 January 1976 a round trip for shopping commenced from Houndstone Camp into Yeovil on Thursdays only and on 30 January the Taunton to South Petherton service was extended to Martock on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

In May 1978 agreement was reached between H&C, Western National and Somerset County Council that H&C would take over sole operation of Western National's route 466 South Petherton - Montecute - Yeovil which had been the subject of much competition between the two companies.

From 22 May H&C became sole operators of the service, however, this led to some grievance among H&C drivers who were not on the same pay rates as their Western National counterparts. This led to a demand for a pay rise (stated to be 22%) which the company refused saying they could not afford to increase wages. In response the drivers stated that they would

become union members and have the union rates and conditions imposed. The directors responded by stating that in view of this and the increasing costs of operating the company they felt it was no longer viable to continue and would be surrendering their operating licences at the end of May, which they duly did.

Thus on 31 May 1979 the last service bus from Yeovil to South Petherton arrived back at the depot at 10.45 bringing the Hutchings & Cornelius story to an end after 45 years of service to the people of Somerset.

Bus Fleet List 1934-1979

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

1934

YC1389	Thornycroft A2 Long	14687	Vincent	B20F
YC4558	Thornycroft A1	16720	Hall Lewis	B14F
YC6604	Thornycroft A6	18295	Vincent	B26F
YC7987	Thornycroft BC Forward	18992	Ransomes	B32F
YD374	Thornycroft A2 Long	18730	Vincent	B20F
YD2864	Thornycroft A2 Long	18754	Vincent	B20F
YD4044	Thornycroft CD Forward	22251	Beadle	B32R
YD7317	Dennis Lancet	170280	Dennis	C32R
YD9639	Thornycroft CD	24069	Beadle	B32R
AYA170	Dennis Ace	200241	Dennis	B20F

YC1389, YC4558, YC6604, YC7987 ex-Hutchings, South Petherton (new 1927, 1928, 1929, 1929 respectively).

1934 (continued)

YD374, YD2864, YD4044, YD7317 ex-Cornelius, Barrington (new 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933 respectively); numbered 3, 4, 7, 8 respectively.

YD9639 ex-demonstrator; also quoted as bodied by Northern Counties; numbered 9.

Withdrawn **1938** (YC1389, YC6604), **1939** (YC4558), **1943** (YD374, YD2864), **1946** (YD4044), **1948** (YC7987), **1949** (YD7317), **1950** (YD9639, AYA170).

1935

AYC385	Dennis Mace	240006	Dennis	B26C
AOR147	Thornycroft AE	25186	Wadham	B20F

Withdrawn **1950** (AOR147), **by 1952** (AYC385).

1936

BYD182	Thornycroft DF	25744	Grose	FB25F
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BYD182 numbered 13.

Withdrawn **1949** (BYD182).



YD9639 was the first new vehicle for H&C in 1934 and was a Thornycroft CD with Beadle B32R bodywork. (LTHL collection).

1937

KX6535	Dennis GL	70707	Dennis	B20F
CYC422	Dennis Arrow Minor	255036	Dennis	C25F
CYC657	Dennis Arrow Minor	255040	Dennis	B26F

KX6535 ex-Queens Park Coaches, Aylesbury (new 1931).
 CYC657 numbered 15; numbered 12 by 2/44; numbered 10 by 4/46.
 Withdrawn **1938** (KX6535), **1953** (CYC657), **1955** (CYC422).

1939

EYD220	Dennis Lancet 2	175631	Duple	C33F
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EYD220 numbered 17.
 Withdrawn **1958** (EYD220).



CYC657 was a 1937 Dennis Arrow Minor with Dennis B26F bodywork, seen here on a private hire away from H&C's usual operating area. (Bus Archive).

1940

KX9458	Bedford WLB	108770	Duple	B20F
EBB349	Bedford WTB	111067	NCB	C26F

KX9458 ex-Red Rose Coaches, Wendover (new 1932); numbered 16.
 EBB349 ex-The Eden, West Auckland (new 1937); numbered 15; body also
 quoted as by Robson.
 Withdrawn **1949** (KX9458), **1952** (EBB349).

1942

FN9948	Tilling-Stevens B10C2	6152	Short	B29R
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FN9948 ex-East Kent Road Car (new 1929).
 Withdrawn **by 1948** (FN9948).

1943

JJ1836	Dennis Lancet	170266	Duple	C32R
AHU450	Thornycroft CD	24156	Beadle	C32R
AMR733	Dennis Lancet 2	175204	Dennis	B33F
BTE861	Dennis Lancet 2	175194	Duple	C32F
CUP282	Dennis Lancet 2	175402	Duple	B32F
FYD137	Bedford OWB	11486	Duple	B32F
FYD138	Bedford OWB	11881	Mulliner	B32F

JJ1836 ex-War Department (new 1933 to Golden Arrow, London).

AHU450 ex-War Department (new 1934 to Bristol Co-op, No. 1).

AMR733 ex-War Department (new 1937 to Gem Coaches, Salisbury).

BTE761 ex-Coachwork Components (new 1937 to Harrison & Sons, Morecambe).

CUP282 ex-Featonby & Taylor, Haswell (new 1937; acquired 1941 but may not have entered service until 1943); re-bodied by Vincent to FB37F by 10/1951.

FYD137 re-seated to B30F by 10/51; rebuilt and re-seated to DP28F by Vincent at unknown date.

Withdrawn **1948** (JJ1836, AHU450), **1955** (FYD138), **1956** (AMR733), **1958** (BTE861), **1962** (CUP282), **1967** (FYD137).

1946

ANY500	Dennis Lancet	170960	Davies	C32C
CHU966	Thornycroft Ardent FE	24790	Grose	FC26R

ANY500 ex-War Department (new 1935 to Probert, Aberdare with Dennis body); Davies body fitted in 1946 possibly by Hutchings & Cornelius (source unknown).

CHU966 ex-War Department (new 1936 to Bristol Co-op, No. 3).
 Withdrawn **1947** (CHU966), **1950** (ANY500).

1947

BRP835	Bedford OWB	10592	Roe	B30F
JPK803	Bedford OWB	12119	Mulliner	B30F

BRP835 ex-Harris, Bridgwater (new 1942 to York Bros, Northampton, No. 2).
 JPK803 ex-Yellow Bus Service, Stoughton (new 1942).
 Withdrawn **1952** (BRP835), **1957** (JPK803).



JPK803 was a 1942 Bedford OVB with Mulliner B30F bodywork that had been new to Yellow Bus of Stoughton before joining H&C in 1947. (Bus Archive)

1948

JYD426	Bedford OB	74667	Mulliner	B31F
KYA238	Dennis Lancet 3	353J3	Lee	C33F

JYD426 rebuilt by Vincent to B29F after 10/51.
 KYA238 re-bodied by Vincent to FB33F after 10/51.
 Withdrawn **1961** (JYD426), **1965** (KYA238).

1949

KYD379	Seddon Mk4	3168	ACB	C29F
LYC10	Bedford OB	121390	Mulliner	B31F

LYC10 rebuilt and re-seated to B29F by Vincent after 10/51.
 Withdrawn 1962 (KYD379), **1963** (LYC10).



KYA238 was a 1947 Dennis Lancet III with Vincent FB33F bodywork although it originally carried a Lee C33F half-cab body. (LTHL collection).

1950

LYC129	Austin CXB	143418	Reading	C31F
MYA391	Jensen JLP1	9335/JLP/003	Sparshatts	B40F
MYA816	Jensen JLP1	5123/JLP/005	Sparshatts	B40F

Withdrawn **1964** (MYA391, MYA816), **1965** (LYC129).

1953

CCX660	Daimler CWA6	11663	Brush	L27/28R
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CCX660 ex-Cardale Garage, Nottingham (new 1944 to Huddersfield JOC, No. 200).

Withdrawn **1957** (CCX660).

1954

RYD143	Austin K4/CXD	232540	Strachans	C32C
RYD144	Dennis Lancet LU2	133LU2	Strachans	B44F

Withdrawn **1964** (RYD143), **1967** (RYD144).



MYA816 was the second of two Jensen JLP1 chassis with Sparshatt's B40F bodywork delivered in 1950. (LTHL collection).

1955

TYC319-20 Dennis Lancet LU2 143-44LU2 Strachans DP41F

Withdrawn 1968 (TYC320), 1969 (TYC319).

1957

RC8482 Daimler CWA6 11954 Duple L27/28R

YYB117 Dennis Lancet LU2 159LU2 Harrington DP40F

YYB118-19 Dennis Lancet LU2 160-61LU2 Harrington B42F

RC8482 ex-Trent Motor Traction (new 1944, No. 1311).

Withdrawn 1958 (RC8482), 1971 (YYB117), 1973 (YYB119), 1974 (YYB118).

1958

623BYA Dennis Loline 1 137Y1 East Lancs H37/31R

708BYB Austin J2VA 26602 Kenex M11

122BYD Austin J2VA 29681 Kenex M11

632CYB Dennis Lancet LU5 103LU5 Harrington DP40F

Withdrawn 1965 (708BYB, 122BYD), 1973 (623BYA, 632CYB).



Heading for South Petherton is TYC320 a 1955 Dennis Lancet LU2 with Strachans DP41F bodywork. (LTHL collection).

1961

823KYD AEC Reliance 2MU3RV3649 Harrington C37F

Withdrawn **1969** (823KYD).

1962

933-34NYB Albion NS3AN 82064J/65K Harrington B31F

Withdrawn **1970** (933-934NYB).

1963

432RYD Albion NS3AN 82066E Harrington B31F
217UYC AEC Reliance 2MU3RA3587 Harrington B45F

Withdrawn **1970** (432RYD), **1972** (217UYC).



1962 Albion Nimbus NS3AN 934NYB with Harrington B31F bodywork is seen at the garage in South Petherton in June 1968. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

1964

216UYC	AEC Reliance	2MU3RA3586	Harrington	C41F
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Withdrawn **1970** (216UYC).

1965

BYD730C	Austin J2M16	128057	BMC	M11
BYD735C	AEC Reliance	4MU4RA5667	Harrington	C51F
CYD724C	AEC Reliance	2MU4RA5997	Harrington	C41F

Withdrawn **1968** (BYD730C), **1974** (BYD735C), **1979** (CYD724C).

1967

YMP551	Bedford SB	11896	Duple	C37F
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YMP551 ex-Hill, Stibb Cross (new 1953 to JM Coaches, London).
 Withdrawn **1969** (YMP551).



A second-hand purchase in 1967 was YMP551, a 1953 Bedford SB with Duple C37F bodywork, seen here parked at the garage . It spent just two years with H&C being withdrawn in 1969. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

1968

KHU629E	Bedford CALZ	7304735	Martin Walter	M11
TYC250G	AEC Reliance	6MU3R7100	Willowbrook	B45F

KHU629E ex-Z-Car Hire, Bristol (new 1967).
 Withdrawn **1970** (KHU629E), **1979** (TYC250G).

1969

TYD122G	AEC Reliance	6MU3R6774	Willowbrook	B45F
VYA834G	AEC Reliance	6MU4R7207	Plaxton	C41F
WYD306H	AEC Reliance	6MU3R7320	Willowbrook	B45F
WYD928H	AEC Reliance	6MU3R7321	Willowbrook	B45F

Withdrawn **1974** (VYA834G), **1979** (TYD122G, WYD306H, WYD928H).

1970

CYA181J	AEC Reliance	6MU3R7511	Plaxton	B47F
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Withdrawn **1979** (CYA181J).



TYD122G was a 1969 AEC Reliance with Willowbrook B45F bodywork, one of four new to H&C that year. (Richard Simons).

1972

GYC160K	Bristol LH6L	LH-605	ECW	B45F
KYA905K	AEC Reliance	6MU4R21190	Willowbrook	C51F

Withdrawn **1977** (GYC160K, KYA905K).

1973

GWY970J	Ford R226	BC04KR59753	Plaxton	C53F
NYD440L	Bristol LH6L	LH-677	ECW	B43F
RYA700L	Bristol VRTSL6LX	VRT/SL2/533	ECW	H39/31F

GWY970J ex-Roma Coaches, London (new 1971).

Withdrawn **1975** (GWY970J), **1979** (NYD440L, RYA700L).

1974

EMB167K	Ford R226	BC04LM44941	Plaxton	C53F
UYD920M	Ford R1014	BC04MY53454	Plaxton	C45F

EMB167K ex-Shearings Holidays, Altrincham (new 1972).

Withdrawn **1979** (EMB167K, UYD920M).



RYA700L was the replacement for the 1958 flagship Dennis Loline and was a Bristol VRT with ECW H39/31F bodywork that enabled H&C to complete 100% one-man operation. (John Law).

1975

JYB538N	Ford R1014	BC04PB53708	Plaxton	B46F
KYA386N	Ford R1114	BC04PB57601	Duple	C53F

Withdrawn **1979** (JYB538N, KYA386N).

1976

9950HW	Bedford SB5	89632	Duple	C41F
SGD654	Leyland PDR1/1	622884	Alexander	H44/34F
XTM875L	Ford R192	BC04LU57828	Duple	C45F
OYC241P	Ford R1114	BC04RU60268	Plaxton	C53F

9950HW ex-Wessex Coaches, Bristol (new 1962).

SGD654 ex-Strathclyde PTE (new 1962 to Glasgow Corporation, No. LA76).

XTM875L ex-Edwards, Markham (new 1972).

Withdrawn **1977** (9950HW), **1979** (SGD654, XTM875L, OYC241P).

1977

FPC15J	AEC Reliance	6MU4R7763	Willowbrook	B51F
GST423N	Ford R1014	BC04PR59100	Duple	B53F

FPC15J ex-Safeguard Coaches, Guildford (new 1971).

GST423N ex-West End Garage, Dingwall (new 1975).

Withdrawn **1979** (FPC15J, GST423N).

1978

JUN199P	Ford R1014	BC04RC59802	Duple	C45F
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JUN199P ex-Lovering, Combe Martin (new 1975)

Withdrawn **1979** (JUN199P).

1979

DAU427C	Leyland PDR1/2	L23234	MCCW	H44/34F
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DAU427C ex-Nottingham City Transport (new 1965, No. 427).

Withdrawn **1979** (DAU427C).



GST423N had been new to West End Garage, Dingwall in 1975 and was acquired by H&C in 1977. It was a Ford R1014 with Duple B53F bodywork. (Richard Simons).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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