

# Blue Ensign Coaches Ltd.



1920 - 1978

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**Cover Illustration:** 3568DT, a 1959 AEC Regent V with Roe 73-seat bodywork, seen here in King Avenue, Rossington in 1973 It was withdrawn in 1975. (Alan Hall).

With thanks to W.J.Wyse (courtesy Mike Morant), Alan Hall and Bruce Tilley for illustrations.

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In October 1920, George Ennifer began operating on a route from Rossington (a large mining village just south of Doncaster) to Doncaster, using a newly purchased Ford T chassis with interchangeable 14-seat bodywork. By the mid-1920's he was one of a number of operators plying the same route and had acquired several more vehicles, including three larger capacity Vulcan's, all purchased new. This route remained the company's main stage carriage service (with short workings to Bessacarr) throughout. The company, by this time, was trading as G. H. Ennifer (Blue Ensign).

A licence for a route between Grimsby and Brigg, via Gainsborough was applied for in 1928, but was unsuccessful, which probably resulted in Blue Ensign's association with another local operator, Ernest Heath, who had a stage carriage service connecting Skellow and Carcroft with Doncaster. He traded from a garage in Bentinck Street, Doncaster (which was the home of Blue Ensign for a number of years) and for a while the fleetname Bentinck and Ensign was adopted. The Bentinck and Ensign emblem, a winged B&E motif, survived into the 1950's with the '&' blacked out, until it was replaced by a blue ensign flag with Blue Ensign superimposed over the design. This was used throughout the remaining life of the company, although applied almost exclusively to the coaches (only one double-decker - BUS106 - is known to have carried the emblem).

By 1932, Ennifer (with Heath probably taking the role of sleeping partner) was in partnership with E. Farmer (who operated under the fleetname Blue Bus and ran a service to Harworth), the company being officially registered as Ennifer & Farmer

Limited. Just over two years later this partnership ended, the company now being registered as G. H. Ennifer Limited.

The early fleet had consisted of several chassis types, including Thornycroft, Dennis, Karrier and Leyland, but in 1931 the company purchased an AEC Regal coach, which was the start of a long association, lasting until 1975 when the last AEC was withdrawn from service.

Between 1934 and 1936, Ernest Heath was required to provide finance for the company to see it through difficult times and, by 1939, his brother-in-law, Vernon Packer, had assumed control after George Ennifer got into financial difficulties and was forced to relinquish his position on the board, although he continued to work as an employee of the company.

Following the end of the Second World War, fuel restrictions meant that economy was paramount and as the decade progressed a move from heavyweight chassis, like the AEC Regal, to the more economical Bedford chassis was made. From 1957 onward, all Blue Ensign's new coaches were of Bedford manufacture. The first double-decker in the fleet arrived in 1946. UG1052 was a Leyland TD2, formerly No. 14 in the Leeds Corporation fleet, and had a Roe H30/26R body. It remained with Blue Ensign for just two years. An interesting vehicle acquired in 1947 was an AEC Q, from London Transport, which operated for a number of years and was relatively trouble-free whilst

with Blue Ensign. At one time this vehicle carried a small version of the B&E motif on its front panel.

The first new double-decker was purchased in 1948, a Crossley DD42/7 with Scottish Commercial Motors H30/26R bodywork, the start of a brief flirtation with Crossley Motors.

The garage at Bentinck Street, Doncaster remained in the possession of the Heath family and its descendants until 1956 when it was purchased outright by Blue Ensign. When Doncaster town centre was re-developed in the 1960's the garage was subject to a compulsory purchase order and the company moved to a purpose built garage in Union Street, which had accommodation for up to 6 vehicles.

In July 1967 the first rear-engined double-decker was purchased, PDT497E, a Daimler CRG6LX Fleetline with flat-fronted Roe H44/34F bodywork.

In May 1971 the company (still officially G. H. Ennifer Ltd.) was re-named Blue Ensign Coaches Limited.

On the 1st April 1978 the company was sold to South Yorkshire PTE, primarily, like so many of the other independents of the time, because of the owners' impending retirement. Although South Yorkshire PTE retained all six vehicles in the fleet, the Blue Ensign livery was slowly painted over and, by the end of the following year, the identity of another of Doncaster's band of independents had disappeared forever.

## **Bus Fleet List 1920-1978**

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

### **1920**

**WR4165; Ford T; ? ; ?; ?14?**

Withdrawn 1925.

### **1922**

**WY4042; Vulcan; VSD100; County Carriers; B20?**

Withdrawn 1926.

### **1923**

**WT1240; Vulcan 2-ton; ?; ?; B26F**

Withdrawn 1928.

**1924**

**WT7429; Vulcan VWD; VWD194; ?; B26?**

Withdrawn 1927.

**1926**

**HO6454; Thornycroft A2; 12218; ?; ?26?  
WB4951; Dennis E; 17829; ?; B30?**

HO6454 ex-Thornycroft demonstrator (new 1925).  
Withdrawn by 1930 (HO6454), 1931 (WB4951).

**1927**

**WW2084; Karrier JKL; 10540; ?; C32?**

Withdrawn by 1943.

**1928**

**DT728; Thornycroft A2; 15372; ?; ?24?  
DT828; Thornycroft A2; 15367; ?; ?20?  
DT1106; Leyland PLSC3; 47421; ?; B31F  
UA5119; Dennis E; 17586; Ramsden?; B32?**

Withdrawn 1928 (DT828), 1931 (DT1106), 1932 (DT728, UA5119).

**1929**

**WE5026-27; Leyland TS2; 60599-600; ?; ?26?**

Withdrawn 1931 (WE5026-5027).

**1931**

**WX6434; AEC Regal; 662590; ?; C32F  
WX6702; AEC Regal; 662589; Plaxton; B32F**

WX6434 re-bodied by Plaxton c.1937-39.  
Withdrawn 1939 (WX6702), 1950 (WX6434).



**1937**

**DT8378; AEC Regal; 6622157; Burlingham; C32F**

Withdrawn 1951.

**1939**

**ADT986; AEC Regal; 6622476; Plaxton; C32F**

Withdrawn 1951.

**1944**

**CDT443; Bedford OWB; 20113; Duple; C29F**

Withdrawn 1948.

**1946**

**DDT244; Bedford OB; 23228; Duple; C29F**  
**UG1052; Leyland TD2; 1718; Roe; H30/26R**

UG1052 ex-Leeds Corporation (No. 14, new 1932).  
Withdrawn 1948 (UG1052), 1949 (DDT244).

**1947**

**BPG507; AEC Q; 761014; Weymann; H29/24C**

BPG507 ex-London Transport (No. Q4, new 1934).  
Withdrawn 1952.

**1948**

**FDT202; Crossley DD42/7; 94068; Scottish Commercial Motors; H30/26R**  
**FDT804; Crossley SD42/7; 97365; Scottish Commercial Motors; C33F**

Withdrawn 1952 (FDT804), 1964 (FDT202).

**1949**

**GDT116; Crossley SD42/7; 97768; Santus; C33F**  
**GDT326; Maudslay Marathon III; 70342; Santus; C33F**  
**GCE452; Crossley SD42/7; 97873; Strachan; C33F**

GCE452 ex-Cotter's Motor Tours Ltd., Glasgow (new 1949).  
Withdrawn 1952 (GDT326), 1954 (GDT116), 1957 (GCE452).



**AEC Q BPG507 was acquired in 1947 from London Transport and was new in 1934. It was withdrawn in 1952. (W.J. Wyse courtesy Mike Morant).**

**1950**

**GUS250; AEC Regal III; 9621E358; Plaxton; C33F**

GUS250 ex-Cotter's Motor Tours Ltd., Glasgow (new (1949).  
Withdrawn 1957.

**1952**

**BUS106; AEC Regent; 06616149; Weymann; H30/26R  
LDT210; AEC Regal IV; 9821E1421; Burlingham; C37C  
LDT256; AEC Regal IV; 9821E172; Burlingham; C37C**

BUS106 ex-Glasgow Corporation (No. 540, new 1938).  
Withdrawn 1960 (BUS106), 1961 (LDT210, LDT256).

**1954**

**ODT845; AEC Regal IV; 9822S1760; Burlingham; C37C**

Withdrawn 1961.

**1955**

**KDT393; AEC Regent III; 9613A5644; Roe; H31/25R**

KDT393 ex-Doncaster Corporation (No. 122, new 1951).  
Withdrawn 1967.

**1957**

**YDT417; Bedford SBG; 59109; Plaxton; C37F**

Withdrawn 1961.

**1959**

**3568DT; AEC Regent V; 2D3RA745; Roe; H41/32F**

Withdrawn 1975.

**1961**

**8970-72DT; Bedford SB5; 89505-06/487; Plaxton; C41F**

Withdrawn 1965 (8970DT, 8972DT), 1969 (8971DT).



**KDT393 was only 4 years old when acquired in 1955 from Doncaster Corporation. It was an AEC Regent III with Roe 56-seat bodywork, withdrawn in 1967.(LTHS - photographer unknown).**

**1964**

**758NDT; AEC Regent V; 2D3RA1420; Roe; H41/32F**

Withdrawn 1975.

**1965**

**FDT900-01C; Bedford SB5; 96919/7106; Plaxton; C41F**

Withdrawn 1969 (FDT901C), 1971 (FDT900C).

**1967**

**FDT497E; Daimler CRG6LX; 62061; Roe; H44/34F**

FDT497E to South Yorkshire PTE (SYPTe) 4/78 (re-numbered 1328).

**1969**

**XDT957-58G; Bedford VAM70; 8T461649/9T462297; Plaxton; C45F**

Withdrawn 1971 (XDT957-958G).



**Blue Ensign's first rear-engined bus was this Daimler CRG6LX (FDT497E) with Roe 78-seat bodywork that passed to South Yorkshire PTE as their No. 1328 in 1978. (Bruce Tilley).**



**1971**

**HDT421-23J; Bedford YRQ; 1T488031/109/525; Duple; C45F**

Withdrawn 1973 (HDT421-423J).

**1973**

**UDT559-61L; Bedford YRQ; CW452749/03/51; Duple; C45F**

Withdrawn 1977 (UDT559-561L).

**1975**

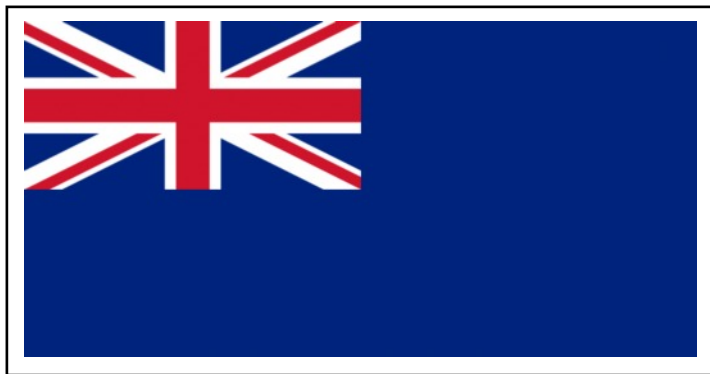
**JAK926-27N; Daimler CRG6LX; 68741/65; Roe; H44/34F**

JAK926-927N to SYPTE 4/78 (re-numbered 1329-1330).

**1977**

**PKY416-18R; Bedford YLQ; GW452437/541/17; Plaxton; C45F**

PKY416-418R to SYPTE 4/78 (re-numbered 1096-1098).



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