

Lesser Known Coachbuilders 3



Associated Coachbuilders Ltd
Air Dispatch (Coachbuilding) Ltd | Bruce Coach Works Ltd
Metalcraft (Staffordshire) Ltd
Lydney Coachworks Ltd | Mumford Body & Engineering Works Ltd

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Cover Illustration: DUX 655, a 1947 Daimler CVD6 was barely two years old when re-bodied with this full fronted design by Metalcraft. (Adam Floyd).

With thanks to The Bus Archive, Adam Floyd, Paul Haywod, RHG Simpson, Roy Marshall and John Boylett (courtesy John Kaye) for illustrations.

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Associated Coachbuilders Ltd 1946-1954

In 1933 the shipyard of Robert Thompson at Southwick was sold to National Shipbuilders Security Ltd as part of a Government scheme to rationalise redundant shipbuilding capacity during the Great Depression. The sale imposed a 40-year moratorium on shipbuilding and the site became derelict.

In December 1945, former Mayor of Sunderland, Sir Myers Wayman, in anticipation of a postwar boom in coachbuilding, founded a new company called Associated Coachbuilders (ACB), under his chairmanship, to build PSV and commercial vehicle bodies. The directors of the company included several well-known Sunderland businessmen.

The former shipbuilding site at Southwick was acquired and the established local firm of Blagg & Company of Hartley's Buildings, Hylton Road was taken over. Blagg had been building PSV and coach bodies for some years, although never in great quantities and had built several for Sunderland Corporation.

In 1946 a new assembly shop was constructed at Thirlwell Road on the shipyard site, measuring 200 x 75 feet with a single-span roof and the Company was incorporated. Despite its recent inception the Company's brochures gave the impression of a longer history with statements such as '*since the formation of the Company many years ago, when horse drawn vehicles were the vogue....*'. This may be a reference to the past history of Blagg rather than ACB!

Initially the company's outlook looked good with a healthy order book and bodies were fitted to an assortment of chassis including bus and coach, of which about 170-180 were built. ACB concentrated on providing a standard service bus body and a luxury coach version both of which were for single-deck, although double-deck bodies were built. Bodies could be adapted to customer specifications.

In 1949 the Company produced the ACB Coronation Land Cruiser, a luxury 41-seat body on Bedford chassis, although it could be adapted for other chassis. It was considered by its designers to be the finest in Britain and was equipped to luxurious standards and was showcased at the 1952 London Commercial Motor Show. Unfortunately the coach industry did not share their enthusiasm and relatively few were produced.



Left: Associated Coachbuilders Standard Service Bus Body on Leyland chassis for Express Services of Durham with seating for 35 passengers. (The Bus Archive).

Right: Associated Coachbuilders Luxury Coach Body on a Foden chassis for Crown Coaches of Birtley with seating for 33 passengers. (The Bus Archive).





Associated Coach Builders' Coronation Land Cruiser C39C bodywork on a 1954 Sentinel SLC6/30 operating for Trimdon Motor Services subsidiary Bluebird Coaches (No. 39). (LTHL collection).

By 1951 the Company was already in trouble and had slashed the workforce from 250 to around 50. A number of industrial disputes and fluctuating orders did nothing to help the Company's fortunes and an order from Sunderland Corporation for five bodies in 1954 was too little too late. The orders dried up and in December 1954 the Company's assets were auctioned off and the business subsequently dissolved.

In producing this section reference has been made to the following publication: "From Shipbuilding to Coaches" published by Neil Mearns in the Sunderland Echo, 7 September 2017.

Air Dispatch (Coachbuilding) Ltd

Bruce Coach Works Ltd

1946-1952

Air Dispatch Ltd was established by Mrs Mildred Bruce and incorporated on 9 July 1934 to operate air services between London and Paris. With the onset of World War II the entire fleet of aircraft (which at that time numbered 23) was requisitioned and all their key staff called up. With no aircraft to fly the company had to turn to other employment and soon they were repairing damaged aircraft and had built up a workforce of over 400. When the war ended Air Dispatch set about making applications for the necessary licences to resume their operations, but the election of a Labour Government and the nationalisation of the aircraft industry thwarted these ambitions. As a result the company were forced to continue with aircraft repairs but a discussion with Cardiff Corporation Transport who, in common with other operators, were seeking repairs and refurbishment of some of the elderly constituents of its fleet of buses, led to the company's entry into coachbuilding. East Lancashire had already rebuilt five vehicles for the Corporation but were snowed under with orders and it was agreed between Cardiff Corporation, East Lancashire and Air Dispatch that future repair and refurbishment would be carried out by Air Dispatch. The first repaired bus re-entered service in December 1946

and in addition, by April 1947, they were also preparing to build complete bodies on frames supplied in kit form by East Lancs following another agreement. The first frames arrived in June 1947 and the first of the completed bodies left Air Dispatch in November. A new company Air Dispatch (Coachbuilding) Ltd was formed to carry out the work.

Bodies produced by Air Dispatch (Coachbuilding) Ltd

This listing is in the format - Year built; Reg No; Chassis; Seating; Operator; Fleet No.

1947	CUH371-372	AEC Regent II	H30/26R	Cardiff Corporation	95-96
1948	CUH373-376	AEC Regent II	H30/26R	Cardiff Corporation	97-100
1948	DKG829-837	AEC Regent II	H30/26R	Cardiff Corporation	105-113
1948	JK9982-9984	Leyland PD2/1	H28/24R	Eastbourne Corporation	25-27
1948	HC8216	Leyland PD2/1	H28/24R	Eastbourne Corporation	40

Total production under Air Dispatch name was 19 double-deck bodies.

Note: Warrington Corporation Nos. 100-101 (EED9-10) are often quoted as having Air Dispatch bodies but there is no documentary evidence to substantiate this and it seems likely that these were built entirely by East Lancs.



Eastbourne Corporation No. 40 (HC8216) was a 1940 Leyland PD2/1 with Air Dispatch 52-seat bodywork on East Lincs frames. (LTHL collection).

In September 1948 the Company's name was changed to Bruce Coach Works Ltd (the Bruce family being major shareholders) and all future production carried Bruce makers plates, although some of the early bodies were undoubtedly commenced under the Air Dispatch name. The first vehicles completed under the Bruce name was another order from Eastbourne Corporation (Nos. 28-31; JK9985-9988 on AEC Regent III chassis). Throughout 1948 a substantial number of bodies were repaired and refurbished as well as new bodies built on East Lancs frames, who also supplied sundry other fitments and as a result the completed bodies obviously bore a resemblance to the standard East Lancs bodies of the time.

By 1950 the end of the postwar coachbuilding boom was in sight, although it proved a good year for Bruce with over 100 bodies produced, by 1951 orders had dried up and just ten chassis were bodied. After the Company's close co-operation with Cardiff Corporation it was somewhat ironic that an order for 15 bodies that went to D. J. Davies of Merthyr Tydfil may have sealed its fate. Once East Lancs had fulfilled all their orders they had no need to send frames to Bruce to be completed and Bruce had no designs of their own ready for the market. The result was inevitable. In December 1951 Bruce bodied a batch of eight AEC Regent III chassis for Eastbourne Corporation using East Lancs frames and these proved to be the last Bruce bodies built. The contract work from East Lancs finished and

Bruce Coach Works closed the doors for the final time in April 1952.

Bodies produced by Bruce Coach Works Ltd

This listing is in the format - Year built; Reg No; Chassis; Seating; Operator; Fleet No.

1948	JK9985-9988	AEC Regent III	H28/24R	Eastbourne Corpn	28-31
1948/49	DUH301-320	Bristol KW6G	H33/26R	Cardiff Corpn	114-33
1949	FED740-751	Bristol K6G	H30/26R	Warrington Corpn	45-56
1949	EET579-584	Bristol L6B	B32C	Rotherham Corpn	179-184
1949	HW0189-190	AEC Regent III	L27/26R	West Monmouthshire	28-29
1949	LDE500-501	AEC Regent III	L27/26R	Greens Motors	---
1949	FWN636-637	AEC Regent III	H30/26R	Swan Motors	36-37
1949	HTX396-397	AEC Regent III	L27/26R	Gelligaer UDC	9/18
1949	KTE976-979	Leyland PD1A	H30/26R	Accrington Corpn	119-122
1949/50	EB0905/8-21	BUT9641T	H38/29D	Cardiff Corpn	248/51-64
1949/50	GED53-62	Bristol K6G	H30/26R	Warrington Corpn	57-66
1950	FB085-94	BUT9641T	H38/29D	Cardiff Corpn	265-274
1950	EUH733-42	AEC Regent III	H33/26R	Cardiff Corpn	1-10
1950	EUH744-745	AEC Regent III	H33/26R	Cardiff Corpn	12-13
1950	EUH749-751	AEC Regent III	H33/28R	Cardiff Corpn	17-19

Bodies produced by Bruce Coach Works Ltd (continued)

1950	GED389-393	Bristol K6G	H30/26R	Warrington Corpn	67-71
1950	JAX480/500	Daimler CVD6	L27/26R	West Monmouthshire	14/27
1950	GCY738-741	Daimler CVD6	H30/26R	Swan Motors	38-41
1950	FTH836-841	AEC Regal III	B35F	Llanelly Traction	17-18/23 30-32
1950	EW0579	Guy Arab II	L27/26R	West Monmouthshire	21
1950/51	GDW94-103	Leyland PD2/3	H30/26R	Newport Corpn	27-36
1951	JW0354-355	AEC Regal III	B35R	Bedwas & Machen UDC	6-7
1951	AHC441-448	AEC Regent III	H30/26R	Eastbourne Corpn	41-48

Total production under the Bruce Coach Works name was 142 (128 double-deck and 14 single-deck bodies).

In producing this section reference has been made to the following publication: "A Short History of Air Dispatch and Bruce Coach Works Ltd of Cardiff" published by the Cardiff Transport Preservation Group, 2002.



Newport Corporation No. 32 (GDW99) was a Leyland PD2/3 with Bruce 56-seat bodywork, dating from 1951. (LTHL collection).

Metalcraft (Staffordshire) Ltd

1946-1954

Metalcraft (Staffordshire) Ltd was founded in early 1946 by three individuals (Messrs Clowes, Hewitt, and Kent) who had previously worked for Copestick & Farrell Ltd, a steel fabrication business based in the Potteries town of Fenton. The directors of the fledgling Metalcraft rented a small industrial unit in Newcastle-under-Lyme and assembled a team of craftsmen led by Roy Snape who had previously worked for the Cheshire-based bodywork manufacturer Lawton.

The very first Metalcraft PSV body was completed in early 1947 on a Tilling-Stevens K chassis and delivered to Peel of Maltby in Yorkshire. It was a 35-seater bus and was followed by a similar vehicle with slightly more luxurious dual-purpose seating for Bostock of Congleton. The fact that Metalcraft's first two bodies were built on the comparatively rare Tilling-Stevens chassis might reflect the reluctance of other bodywork manufacturers to adapt their designs to such uncommon types. Most Tilling-Stevens chassis of this period were bodied by Dutfield and offered to operators through a joint sales team (Dutfield's factory was close to that of Tilling-Stevens).

Having proven that they were capable of building perfectly acceptable bodywork and of offering it to operators with a very short delivery time, Metalcraft's order book began to expand. In 1948 five vehicles were bodied (three Fodens, a Leyland PS1 Tiger, and another Tilling-Stevens) and while the latter two vehicles were repeat orders from Peel of Maltby the Fodens were destined for operators in North Wales, Leeds, and London. Advanced orders for 1949 went through the roof and the company was obliged to abandon its relatively small workshop in Newcastle-under-Lyme and seek new premises in an aircraft hangar at Blythe Bridge aerodrome, to the south-east of Stoke-on-Trent.

Known output in 1949 (a few bodies are still untraced) totalled 28, consisting of 4 Crossley SD42s, 2 Daimler CVD6s, 15 Foden PVSC6/PVFE6s, 2 Leyland PS2 Tigers, and 5 Maudslay Marathon IIIs.

PSV production for 1950 was actually slightly down on that for 1949, amounting to 23 known units. This figure included 5 Crossley SD42s, 13 Fodens (an assortment of PVSC6s, PVFE6s, and a solitary PVG6), a Leyland PS2 Tiger, 2 Leyland PSU1 Royal Tigers, and 2 Maudslay Marathons. The Fodens included two PVSC6s for Llandudno Corporation, fitted with "sprag" gears for the excessively steep ascent of The Great Orme headland, while the Royal Tigers (for Don Everall of Wolverhampton) were significant in being the first underfloor engined chassis to receive Metalcraft bodywork.

Sadly no picture has been found of these two Royal Tigers, so you will have to accept on faith that they were among the ugliest coaches ever produced!

The drop in PSV numbers was made up for by other work, with Metalcraft producing sports car bodies for Alvis, van bodywork on Fordson chassis for a Wolverhampton distributor, several "trailer" units fitted out as mobile libraries, and prototypes for "motorised rickshaws" on three-wheel Reliant chassis. The latter were intended for use in countries such as India and Thailand, but no proof has been found that they were actually put into production at Blythe Bridge.

After the brief attack of ugly disease with the first two Royal Tigers, Metalcraft went back to the drawing board and came up with two brand new designs for underfloor chassis for delivery from the start of the 1951 season. One was a fairly conventional "British" design with subdued but tasteful styling (the preserved Foden PVRF6 NTU 125 is of this variant), the other a "Continental" tourer with a straight waist-rail and no less than ten windows on each side (later reduced to eight). Both were well received by contemporary commentators and the first of the "Continental" design (fitted to a Foden PVRF6 demonstrator) made an extended tour of Europe to prove that its rear-mounted two-stroke engine was capable of traversing the Alps.

Known production for 1951 included 2 Regal IVs (which might have been the first AECs to receive Metalcraft bodywork, although it is possible that the "untraced" vehicles included Regal IIIs), the first Bedford SB to pass through Blythe Bridge, a Commer Avenger I, a Crossley SD42, 7 Foden PVRF6s, 3 Guy Wolf 24-seaters for Llandudno UDC (this time for the seafront service), 2 Guy Arab UFs, 6 Leyland Royal Tigers, and 3 Maudslay Marathons. This added up to at least 26 units.

Several of these bodies (including those on two Royal Tigers for Pye of Colwyn Bay and two 30-foot Maudslay Marathons for Churchbridge of Cannock) featured a new ventilation system which incorporated a "cock's comb" inlet centred above the front windscreens and an oval outlet above the rear end windows. The new variation looked quite attractive when viewed from the front but considerably less so when seen from the rear where the outlet looked as if it had been transplanted from an industrial heating system and ruined the lines of the vehicles in question.

The totals for 1952 included 3 more AEC Regal IVs, 4 Daimler D650HS Freelines with the "Continental" style of bodywork for Don Everall, 2 Foden PVRs, a Guy Arab UF, 2 Royal Tigers, and a Marathon III for Churchbridge. The Marathon was a 1947 chassis originally fitted with a West-Nor C33F body which had failed to impress due to the use of poor quality timber framing by the London firm and the new Metalcraft body featured a full front in place of the original half-cab. This adds up to

13 known vehicles for the year, with part of the decline undoubtedly caused by the collapse in domestic demand for the Foden PVR chassis.

Amongst other work undertaken during 1952 was "cut and shut" surgery on a batch of five pre-war Leyland TD5 Titan double-deckers for local operator PMT. The chassis were acquired from Ribble and their original Leyland bodywork (from the notoriously unstable first batch of Leyland metal-framed bodies) were removed and scrapped, being replaced with shorter Beadle units from ex Hants & Dorset Titans of an earlier vintage. Metalcraft made the two halves fit together by extending the Beadle bodies before fitting them to the TD5s.

If 1952 had been a poor year for Metalcraft, 1953 was little short of catastrophic as sales collapsed almost completely. The only two vehicles known to have been manufactured were a Bedford SB and a Guy Arab UF, and as the company disintegrated General Manager Roy Snape abandoned ship and swam back to Lawton.

Metalcraft placed itself into voluntary liquidation in early 1954. Metalcraft may be long gone, but their memory will live on for many a year while the majority of their contemporaries from the post-war boom will be no more than a footnote in a dusty archive.

Metalcraft Body List

The listing which follows includes 102 of the approximately 110 complete PSV bodies produced by Metalcraft.

While this production list is largely self-explanatory, an attempt has been made to differentiate between the different styles of underfloor engined bodywork by adding a code (in brackets) to the seating capacity details. [A] indicates the first design, [B] the "British" design, and [C] the "Continental" variant. Where this code fails to appear the author has never seen a photograph of the (underfloor engined) vehicle in question and so cannot say for sure!

Vehicles marked "+" are known to survive in preservation.

The following listing is in the format - Year built; Reg No; Chassis; Body Type; Operator; Fleet No (if applicable).

An 'R' before the body type signifies a re-bodying. † see footnote.

1947

HWX 416:	Tilling-Stevens K5LA7	B35F	Peel, Maltby.
LLG 685:	Tilling-Stevens K5LA7	DP35F	Bostock, Congleton

1948

FDM 218:	Foden PVSC6	DP33F	Lloyd, Bagillt
ONO 242:	Foden PVSC6	C33F	Majestic, London E15
MUB 644:	Foden PVSC6	C33F	Service, Leeds
HYG 864:	Leyland PS1 Tiger	C33F	Peel, Maltby
JWW 668:	Tilling-Stevens K5LA7	DP35F	Peel, Maltby

1949

FAW 992: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Salopia, Whitchurch	63	
FAW 993: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Salopia, Whitchurch	64	
FUJ 738: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates		
FUJ 739: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates		
DUX 654: Daimler CVD6 (1947)	R/C33F	Eagle Coachways, Trench		
DUX 655: Daimler CVD6 (1947)	R/FC33F	Eagle Coachways, Trench		+
FAW 991: Foden PVSC6	C35F	Salopia, Whitchurch	62	
MUM 633: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Service, Leeds		
MLG 895: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Coppenhall, Sandbach	15	
NPE 152: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Graves, Redhill		
NPG 517: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Graves, Redhill		
NPK 806: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Graves, Redhill		
NPL 900: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Graves, Redhill		
TMM 183: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Ardley Bros, London N17		
UMP 291: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Ardley Bros, London N17		
UMX 412: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Ardley Bros, London N17		
SRF 371: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Bassett, Tittensor		
JAB 234: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Holland, Oldbury		
JAB 692: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Holland, Oldbury		
GUN 1: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Pye, Colwyn Bay		
GUN 2: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Pye, Colwyn Bay		

1949 (continued)

TRE 257:	Leyland PS2/3 Tiger	C35F	Milton, Stoke-on-Trent	
TRF 993:	Leyland PS2/3 Tiger	C35F	Milton, Stoke-on-Trent	
NEH 630:	Maudslay Marathon III	C33F	Jeffries, Goldenhill	
NEH 751:	Maudslay Marathon III	C35F	Rowley, Bignall End	
FNT 12:	Maudslay Marathon III	C33F	Jones, Market Drayton	28
FNT 13:	Maudslay Marathon III	C33F	Jones, Market Drayton	29
SRE 203:	Maudslay Marathon III	FC33F	Churchbridge, Cannock	19



One of Churchbridge's shorter Marathon IIIs, Metalcraft bodied SRE 203, also fully-fronted, but without the roof-top intake to spoil its lines. (RHG Simpson).

1950

GAW 380: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates†	
GAW 381: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates	
GAW 382: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates	
GAW 383: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Cooper, Oakengates	
GNT 65: Crossley SD42/7	C33F	Jones, Market Drayton	35
NUA 885: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Service, Leeds	
NUG 235: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Service, Leeds	
MTU 296: Foden PVFE6	C37F	Coppenhall, Sandbach	16 +
VME 108: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Ardley Bros, London N17	
VMK 260: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Ardley Bros, London N17	
TRF 994: Foden PVG6	FC37F	Bassett, Tittensor†	
JAB 781: Foden PVSC6	C33F	Holland, Oldbury†	
OEH 739: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Davey, Newcastle-under-Lyme	
OEH 740: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Davey, Newcastle-under-Lyme	
KOH 213: Foden PVSC6	FC33F	Sugden, Birmingham	
AJC 91: Foden PVSC6	FC35F	Llandudno UDC	
AJC 92: Foden PVSC6	FC35F	Llandudno UDC	
MMB 861: Foden PVFE6	FC37F	Hollinshead, Scholar Green +	
OPC 730: Leyland PS1/1 Tiger	C33F	Graves, Redhill	
OPE 28: Leyland PS1/1 Tiger	C33F	Graves, Redhill	
ACC 695: Leyland TS7 Tiger (1936)	R/C33F	Clynnog & Trevor, Trevor†	

1950 (continued)

NVT 788: Leyland PS2/3 Tiger	C33F	Stonier, Goldenhill
HJW 870: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C43C[A]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
HJW 871: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C43C[A]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
TRE 843: Maudslay Marathon III	C33F	Poole, Alsager Bank†
HUY 488: Maudslay Marathon III	C33F	Everton, Droitwich†

Footnote: GAW380; in 1958 the chassis of this vehicle was scrapped and the Metalcraft body transferred to Crossley SD42/7 EUX 74 which had previously carried a Junction FC33F body (also scrapped).

TRF944; registered in 1949, but delivered in 1950.

JAB781; registered in 1949, but delivered in 1950.

ACC695; chassis originally registered BRR 929 and was new to East Midland M.S. as No. B29. Clynnog & Trevor scrapped its Brush B32R bodywork and it entered service with its new Metalcraft body in 5/50.

TRE843; registered in 1949, but delivered in 1950.

HUY488; registered in 1949, but delivered in 1950.

1951

HAW 45: AEC Regal IV 9821E	C41C[B] Eagle Coachways, Trench	
CCP 572: AEC Regal IV 9821E	C41C Holdsworth, Halifax	
JJW 231: Bedford SB	C33F Worthington, Wolverhampton	
URE 508: Commer 23A Avenger I	C33F Lloyd, Oldbury	
VRE 462: Crossley SD42/7	C33F Warrington, Ilam	
NTU 125: Foden PVRF6	C41C[B] Hollinshead, Scholar Green +	
OLG 968: Foden PVRF6	C32C[C] Foden, Sandbach†	
MXD 580: Foden PVRF6	C33C[C] Global, London W1	
MXD 581: Foden PVRF6	C33C[C] Global, London W1	
MXL 473: Foden PVRF6	C33C[C] Global, London W1	
MXL 474: Foden PVRF6	C33C[C] Global, London W1	
RPD 250: Foden PVRF6	C41C Graves, Redhill	
AJC 550: Guy Wolf	B24F Llandudno UDC	+
AJC 551: Guy Wolf	B24F Llandudno UDC	
AJC 552: Guy Wolf	B24F Llandudno UDC	
JDA 874: Guy Arab UF	C43C[C] Don Everall, Wolverhampton	
JDA 875: Guy Arab UF	C43C[C] Don Everall, Wolverhampton	
JDA 872: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C43C[C] Don Everall, Wolverhampton	
JDA 873: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C43C[C] Don Everall, Wolverhampton	
HCA 246: Leyland PSU1/11 Royal Tiger	C41C[B] Pye, Colwyn Bay	
HCA 247: Leyland PSU1/11 Royal Tiger	C41C[B] Pye, Colwyn Bay	

1951 (continued)

VRF 629:	Leyland PSU1/11	Royal Tiger	DP41F[B]	Harper Bros, Heath Hayes	48
VRF 630:	Leyland PSU1/12	Royal Tiger	C41C[B]	Harper Bros, Heath Hayes	49
GUX 494:	Maudslay Marathon III (30')	C37F		Jones, Market Drayton	37
URF 841:	Maudslay Marathon III (30')	FC37F		Churchbridge, Cannock	26
URF 842:	Maudslay Marathon III (30')	FC37F		Churchbridge, Cannock	27

Footnote: OLG968; Foden demonstrator; later to Global, London W1.



Churchbridge Luxury Coaches, liked their Metalcraft bodies on Maudslay Marathon III chassis. Two of them were 30-footers and the second, URF 842, is seen here. Note the "cock's comb" intake in the centre of the front dome. (Author's Collection).

1952

HUX 350: AEC Regal IV 9821E	C41C[B]	Eagle Coachways, Trench
ODV 376: AEC Regal IV 9822	DP43F	Tor Bus, Haytor
PVT 746: AEC Regal IV 9821	B45C[C]	Davies of Stoke-on-Trent
KDA 477: Daimler Freeline D650HS	C41C[C]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
KDA 478: Daimler Freeline D650HS	C41C[C]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
KDA 581: Daimler Freeline D650HS	C41C[C]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
KDA 582: Daimler Freeline D650HS	C41C[C]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
KUY 536: Foden PVRF6	C41C[B]	Everton, Droitwich
XRF 128: Foden PVRG6	C41C[B]	Green Bus, Rugeley 23
XRE 678: Guy Arab UF	C41C[C]	Mason, Darlaston
JUK 876: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C41C[C]	Don Everall, Wolverhampton
PDH 515: Leyland PSU1/15 Royal Tiger	C41C[C]	Central, Walsall
NRF 962: Maudslay Marathon III (1947)	R/FC33F	Churchbridge, Cannock 19

1953

YRF 613: Guy Arab LUF	C41C[C]	Mason of Darlaston
BFA 687: Bedford SB	C35F	Viking, Burton-upon-Trent

*In producing this section reference has been made to the following publication:
 "The Metalcraft Story 1946-1954" by Neville Mercer on the 'Old Bus Photos' website,
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Smith's Eagle were so impressed by Metalcraft's re-bodying of the Daimler CVD6's that they came back for "British" style bodywork on two new AEC Regal IV coaches in 1951/52. This is the second of the pair, HUX 350. Withdrawn by Smith's in 1961 it went to Jewitt of Spennymoor in County Durham where it gave a few more years service. (Roy Marshall).



The "Continental" design bodywork seen here on PVT 746, a 1952 AEC Regal IV of Davies of Stoke-on-Trent for use on their share of the Longton to Newcastle-under-Lyme service, it contained 45 bus seats within its central entrance luxury coach shell. (Roy Marshall).



This is probably the very last PSV body produced by Metalcraft before the firm decided to go into liquidation. Originally with Viking of Burton-upon-Trent in 1953, Bedford SB BFA 687 went to Shropshire in 1957 and operated on Edward Smith's stage services. (Roy Marshall).

Lydney Coachworks Ltd Mumford Body & Engineering Works Ltd 1920-1952

In 1900 William Mumford (1878-1959) started his own carriage building business in Glanville Street, Plymouth. He was the son of Joseph Mumford (1835-1892) who had also been in business as a coachbuilder and wheelwright (as Mumford & Sons) and William presumably gained the experience needed from the family business. Motor vehicles were few and far between but William was of the right age to become interested in them and added engineering and servicing to his body building business.

It was not long before the business outgrew the premises and in 1903 he moved to redeveloped Ebrington Street.

In 1908 William also started the first motor bus service between Plymouth and Crownhill using a De Dion Bouton vehicle.

In 1912 he started to build his own flying machine but the project had to be abandoned because of the lack of a decent engine. In 1915 the business moved to spacious premises in Salisbury Road, Saint Jude's, where they later started constructing bodies for bus chassis.

A 5-acre site at Billacombe, Plymstock, was acquired in 1920, which became the Mumford body works and from the early 20's they supplied chassis of various makes and built the bodywork for many commercial and passenger operators throughout the country. While none of these customers were particularly large undertakings there were, nevertheless, plenty of them, and Mumford's name and reputation for good quality products spread.

Other members of the Mumford family were taken on board. Clarence Mumford joined the Company, which was incorporated on September 28th 1922 and he became a director. In 1924, his brother, William Mumford, joined the business. Another brother, Ronald Mumford joined the business in 1926 and William was made a director in 1927. Finally, Kenneth Mumford joined the Company in 1930 and Ronald became a director the following year.

In 1928 the Mumford family acquired the site of the the Abbey Inn in Saint Andrew Street and in 1933 opened the Abbey Garage on the spot. William's father Joseph Mumford had been the landlord of the Abbey Inn in the late 1800's!

William retired in 1930 and left the business in the hands of his four sons, going on to develop a second career as cinema owner.

On November 9th 1938 Western Motor Holdings Limited was incorporated as a holding company for W Mumford Limited, which was absorbed into the group

on December 29th 1938 and Clarence Mumford was appointed chairman of the board in 1939.

From 1939 onwards the works at Billacombe produced aircraft for the War effort and also converted a large number of redundant vehicles into ambulances. They advertised a 16-25hp Abbey Home Service Ambulance, capable of carrying four stretchers, from £85 each.

Following the cessation of hostilities in 1945, Mumford's holding company, Western Motor Holdings acquired premises in Lydney, Gloucestershire and the Mumford bodybuilding activities were relocated here in order to capitalise on the postwar boom in coachbuilding and incorporated as the Mumford Body and Engineering Company Ltd.

One of the original shareholders was to have been Metro-Cammell Weymann (MCW) with a promise that up to 250 double-deck bodies per year could be completed by Mumford at Lydney, although this never transpired.

During 1946 and 1947 repair work was carried out for Eastern Counties Omnibus Company, by April 1947 this had ceased. No new bodies were built during this period although an agreement was finally reached with MCW that some bodies could be completed by Mumford but the only buses bodied between 1947 and 1948 were a batch of 10 double-deckers for Plymouth Corporation and 10 for Red & White Transport.

Finally orders did materialise including an order for 50 bodies from Red & White Transport, who had a number of directors on the board of Lydney Coachworks.

In July 1947 Western Motor Holdings decided to dispose of their subsidiary and the Mumford's resigned from the board. Now that the Mumford family was no longer associated with the company a new name was sought and eventually Lydney Coachworks Ltd was adopted. With the Mumford's gone, Lydney Coachworks now had a board consisting entirely of Red & White directors, making it effectively a Red & White subsidiary.

Unfortunately the new company suffered from the same problem as the old company, a lack of orders and those which did materialise were insufficiently regular to keep the company busy.

In 1949 Leigh Corporation placed an order for 12 bodies which was duly completed and around this time Lydney became interested in producing all-metal bodywork. Discussions were held with the Duramin Engineering Company and a new one Duramin Engineering (Lydney) Ltd was formed to progress the idea. Interest was forthcoming from North Western Road Car and Morecambe & Heysham Corporation but no firm orders were received and a large order by Red & White for bodies on Guy chassis was cancelled.



Leigh Corporation No. 7 (KTD759), a 1949 Leyland PD2/1 with Lydney lowbridge 53-seat bodywork. (Paul Haywood).

In 1950 the Red & White Group sold out to the British Transport Commission (BTC) and became a nationalised company, at the same time an order was placed for 50+ bodies on the Leyland Royal Tiger chassis. With the sale came an agreement by the BTC to order at least 80 bodies per annum from Lydney Coachworks, although in the end this never materialised.

Following a number of meetings it was decided to close the Lydney works in March 1952. The Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company (BTCC) subsequently purchased all stock and materials including a few partly completed bodies. The remainder of the orders were fulfilled at Brislington bodyworks by the BTCC.

In preparing this section the following sources have been consulted: Old Plymouth (website: www.oldplymouth.uk), Brian Moseley; West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust (website: www.busmuseum.org.uk); PSV Circle Historic Journal 902-HJ, March 2015 (which contains a list of known Lydney bodies).



Red & White Transport No. UC951 (JW0213) was a 1951 Leyland Royal Tiger with Lydney 41-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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