

# Birch Brothers Ltd



1899 - 1971

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Cover Illustration: K183 (HLY483), a 1946 Leyland PD1, originally with Birch Brothers 53-seat lowbridge bodywork, but seen here after it was re-bodied by MCCW with 56-seat bodywork in 1956. (John Kaye).

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In the early years of the nineteenth century, William Birch left Plymouth, where his father (also William Birch) was involved in the running of the Exeter to Plymouth stagecoach, to seek his fortune in London. By 1815 he had acquired the lease of premises in Horseferry Road for use as a dairy farm. These premises were subsequently used by his son, also William, from 1832 in connection with his cab business. On 13 April 1846, William Birch (the son), was thrown from his gig and died two days later from his injuries. His widow continued the cab business in order to support their two sons and in 1847 financially assisted William Hattersley, along with two other cab proprietors, Gamble and Langley to start a new bus route from the Monster, Pimlico to Mansion House, which subsequently prospered, since, at the time, the only other route was by steam boat from Westminster Pier. The three proprietors operated jointly as the Westminster Omnibus Association.

In 1851, the Great Exhibition provided an opportunity for Mrs. Birch to run buses on her own account. She purchased four, placing two in service on 1 May 1851 on the Monster-Mansion House route, using the chocolate livery of the Westminster Omnibus Association, operating the remaining two on a route to the Exhibition in Hyde Park later the same month. When the Great Exhibition closed later in the year, all the buses were employed on the Monster-Mansion House route and Mrs Birch also purchased Hattersley's share of the joint venture, becoming owner of half the buses in the Westminster Omnibus Association. In the same period the cab side

of the business was considerably expanded to such an extent that around 200 horses were required.

In 1856 the London General Omnibus Company was formed, whose strategy was to buy up the smaller operators rather than try to oust them by force and by 1857 they had succeeded in purchasing upward of 600 horse-buses, including the other 50% of the Westminster Omnibus Association. This strategy, however, soon put up the purchase price of the remaining operators and the LGOC were forced into partnership agreements with those who would not sell, including Mrs. Birch. This resulted in a pooling arrangement that lasted over 50 years, until the LGOC pulled out of the Associations in 1909.

In 1865 a new route between Hanwell (where Mrs. Birch was resident) and London Bridge was inaugurated and at the same time a new depot was established in Hanwell itself. When Mrs. Birch died in 1874, the route was abandoned due to competition from the new horse tramway along Uxbridge Road and activities were concentrated nearer to the city centre. Her two sons, John Manley Birch and William Samuel Birch, who had become joint partners on her death, dissolved their partnership in 1878 and sold their running times on the Westminster Association's routes.

John Manley Birch bought running times in the Camden Town Omnibus Association and new premises in Cathcart Street, Kentish Town. In 1887,

he started a Royal Mail service between London and Brighton on contract to the Post Office. Similar contracts were obtained between London and other destinations, with the last, between London and Oxford, operating continuously from 1891 to 1909. This resulted in the premises being dubbed Royal Mail Yard.

William Samuel Birch purchased running times in the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association and continued to operate from the premises in Horseferry Road. He was joined in 1885 by his son, William Henry Birch, the company becoming Birch & Son. In 1898 William Henry Birch started his own omnibus business and was so successful that he was able to retire in 1909 (after winding up the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association, of which he was by then chairman).

In November 1899 John Manley Birch and William Samuel Birch again joined forces, this time under the name of Birch Brothers Limited.

In 1904 Birch Brothers put two Milnes-Daimler motorbuses into service, with another fourteen, which were bodied in their own workshops, entering service between 1904 and 1907. The livery of these vehicles followed the current practice of horse-bus operators, vehicles on a specific route being the same colour, so some received the livery of the Camden Town Association (which was yellow, giving rise to the nickname 'Mustard Pots'), whilst others received the crimson lake and cream livery of the

Atlas & Waterloo Association. Unfortunately the early motorbuses were untried and proved troublesome and after mounting losses over the three years, Birch Brothers withdrew from motorised transport and returned to the reliable horse-bus. The last Birch Brothers horse-bus ran early in 1912 on the Hendon to Golders Green route and for a time Birch Brothers withdrew completely from the operation of omnibuses and concentrated on the taxicab business, supplementing this income with horse-drawn contracts from the Post Office.

Birch Brothers had commenced manufacturing their own bus bodies at the turn of the century and the expertise they had gained now came to the fore. A contract for the maintenance of omnibus bodies for the British Automobile Traction concern was won in 1912 and this continued until the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933, when the BAT activities in London ceased.

The rapid development of the motor vehicle brought about by the advent of the First World War and the need for reliability meant that in the postwar period the standards of chassis available were far in excess of those available before the war. With this in mind Birch Brothers purchased some ex-War Department chassis and re-bodied them in their own workshops with char-a-banc bodies and commenced a series of tours. Such was their success that it prompted the company to re-enter the motorbus business once again.

In 1924 the Company placed an order with Leyland Motors for ten LB5 chassis (although only 7 were finally delivered), for bodying in their own workshops. At the same time the stables at the premises in Cathcart Street were rebuilt to accommodate the new bus fleet. Application was made to the Metropolitan Police (who were empowered by the London Traffic Act of 1924 to approve such applications) to operate on the following routes (jointly with Overground, a company based at Chalk Hill Road): Potters Bar to Hampton Court (route 206, re-numbered 227 in 1929); Hadley Highstone to Elephant & Castle (route 227A); Muswell Hill to Victoria Station (route 285); and Potters Bar to Victoria Station (route 284), all of which were approved.

The first few vehicles carried the fleetname 'Archway', but by 1927 the fleetname Birch had been adopted. The standard livery at the time was coffee, Spanish brown and cream, which remained in use until just before the Second World War, when it became cream with lime green relief. This in turn lasted until the late 1950's, when it was replaced by a cream with pillar-box red relief livery. Fleet numbers were applied in separate sequences to both buses and coaches, with buses receiving a 'B' prefix and coaches a 'K' prefix ('C' was already in use for Birch Brothers cabs), although eventually both buses and coaches were given the same 'K' prefix.

In 1925 a joint venture with the City Motor Omnibus Company and the United Motor Omnibus Company to run on the following routes was undertaken;

Highgate to Brockley Cross (route 536A - weekdays); Highgate to Brockley Rise (route 536 - Sundays only) and on 24th May 1925 the West London Association was set up between operators on a new route (526D) between Wandsworth Bridge and North Finchley, via Shepherds Bush and Cricklewood, of which Birch Brothers was one. The Association was set up to protect the interests of the operators on the route, ensuring that a regular frequency was maintained without undue competition. It also allowed each proprietor to provide its own crews and vehicles and to retain the takings from each journey. By 1926 Birch Brothers was also operating a single vehicle on the 15A Ladbroke Grove to East Ham route, but in 1927 it was transferred to operate on the 268 route between Uxbridge and Liverpool Street. This year saw the formation of the London Public Omnibus Company, comprising about 50% of the independent operators then running in London. Birch Brothers, wisely as it turned out, chose not to join the new Company, which succumbed to a take-over by the London General Omnibus Company just twelve months later.

In 1930 the LGOC concluded an agreement with Birch Brothers, which resulted in the LGOC withdrawing from the Hendon to Mill Hill service in return for Birch Brothers withdrawal from routes 26D, 227, 266 and 284A. The LGOC also conceded the running times to two Birch double-deckers on the former West London Association's 526D route (Wandsworth Bridge to North Finchley), the other operators on the route having been acquired by the LGOC.

The passing of the London Passenger Transport Act of 1933, created an area in which all services were to be operated by the newly formed London Passenger Transport Board. As a result, on 21 February 1934, all Birch Brothers routes in London (and the 28 vehicles used to operate them) were compulsorily purchased.

With this eventuality in mind, Birch Brothers had made an early start to expand their operations in other directions. In November 1928 a service to Bedford from London was inaugurated, using newly purchased coaches, and was an immediate success, being extended as far as Kettering by 1930. In 1932 a competitor on the route (Beaumont Safeway Coaches) was acquired, and this route subsequently became the primary route of the Company until its withdrawal from stage carriage work in 1969, although during the Second World War it was curtailed to stop at Rushden, where the terminus subsequently remained.

Between 1928 and 1969 the following country routes were operated,

- 203 London - Welwyn - Hitchin - Bedford - Rushden (Daily)
- 203M London - M1 Motorway - Bedford - Rushden (Daily)
- 204 Hitchin - Whitwell - Welwyn (Daily except Sunday)
- 205 Welwyn - Kimpton - Luton (Daily)
- 206 Luton - Whitwell (Thursday/Saturday/Sunday with extension to Welwyn on Saturday and Sunday)

- 209 Henlow Camp - Hitchin (Daily)
- 210 Harrold - Odell - Sharnbrook - Rushden (Weekdays only)
- 211 Harrold - Carlton - Pavenham - Bedford (Daily)
- 212 Henlow Camp - Luton (Daily)
- 213 Gravenhurst - Campton - Shefford - Bedford (Saturdays only)
- 225 Hitchin - Henlow (continuing to Gravenhurst on Tuesdays OR to Shillington on Saturdays)

In January 1938, Birch Brothers acquired Pirton Belle, of Pirton, together with routes from Luton to Letchworth, via Pirton; and Hitchin to Pirton. Two months later in March 1938 they acquired Sunbeam of Gravenhurst, which included routes from Campton to Luton; and Gravenhurst to Hitchin, along with Twydell of Shillington, which brought Birch Brothers another route, from Shillington to Hitchin. The following month the Whitwell Bus Company was taken over along with routes from Luton to Whitwell, and from Hitchin to Whitwell. In May 1938 Birch Brothers turned their attention to the Rushden area, when three local operators; Abbot & Sons, G. Robinson, and G. H. Scroxtton were acquired together with their tours and excursion licences from Rushden. Finally, in July 1938 Perseverance of Shillington was purchased and three more routes; Meppershall to Luton; Shillington to Hitchin; and Henlow Camp to Luton acquired. A new depot had already been built in High Street North, Rushden during 1937, but the increase in vehicles required to operate the

additional services meant that a further depot was needed. This was constructed in London Road, Henlow Camp, close to the RAF base there.

By 1940, double-deck vehicles had been introduced on the London to Rushden route and eventually most of the country routes were worked by double-deck vehicles.

Another route was acquired in June 1944 with the purchase of the business of Enterprise of Kimpton (Welwyn to Luton, via Kimpton).

When the Second World War ended, a decision was taken to divide the coach and bus business into two separate companies. The bus company would retain the title Birch Brothers Limited, whilst the coaching side would operate under the resurrected name of Ingarfield & Bright (a company Birch Brothers had acquired in 1928). In 1950 the coaching business became Birch Brothers (Ingarfield & Bright) Ltd and by 1955 it was Birch Brothers (Transport) Limited.

A period of consolidation followed, although in the 1960's, the company was hit by falling passenger numbers. The last double-deck vehicle ran in 1967, and the services were reduced to single-deck operation. On 26 December 1963, after over 130 years, the last Birch Brothers cab was withdrawn. In July 1966, Birch Brothers took over the business of Monico

Motorways of Kentish Town, a coach operator, whose vehicles were added to the Birch Brothers (Transport) fleet, receiving an 'M' suffix.

With the downturn in passenger numbers it was decided to abandon the stage carriage services altogether, the first few routes going on the 14 October 1968 along with the garage at Henlow Camp and on 14 September 1969, the final two routes (Nos. 203/203M) passed to United Counties together with twelve vehicles.

The coaching side of the business was retained, operating mainly from the Kentish Town garage, until 1 February 1971 when this business was sold to the George Ewer Group, along with the remaining coaches, and Birch Brothers bowed out of public transport for the final time.

## Bus Fleet List 1904-1971

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

### 1904

-	A7045-46	Milnes Daimler	??	Birch	018/16R0
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One of these vehicles probably had the chassis no. 1507.  
Withdrawn **1907** (A7045-7046).

### 1905

-	A8545	Milnes Daimler	??	Birch	018/16R0
-	LC1043	Milnes Daimler	1810?	Birch	018/16R0
-	LC3160	Milnes Daimler	1827?	Birch	018/16R0

Withdrawn **1907** (A8545, LC1043, LC3160).



1905 Milnes-Daimler A8545, with Birch Brothers own 34-seat bodywork, operating for the Atlas & Waterloo Omnibus Association from whom Birch Brothers had purchased running rights. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

**1906**

-	LC3680	Leyland-Crossley	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC4813	De Dion	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC5476	Milnes Daimler	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC6193	Milnes Daimler	3645?	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC6505	De Dion	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC7590	Milnes Daimler	3815?	Birch	018/16RO
-	LC7743	Milnes Daimler	3829	Birch	018/16RO
-	??	De Dion	??	Birch	018/16RO

Withdrawn **1907** (unknown De Dion, LC4813, LC5476, LC6193, LC6505, LC7590, LC7743), **1908** (LC3680).

**1907**

-	LN3317	Leyland-Crossley	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	??	Milnes Daimler	??	Birch	018/16RO
-	??	Milnes Daimler	??	Birch	018/16RO

Withdrawn **1907** (both Milnes Daimler's), **1908** (LN3317).



For a while Birch Brothers used the 'Archway' fleetname. This is A22 with Birch Brothers 34-seat bodywork, the exact identity of the vehicle is unknown, although probably one of the 1906 intake. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

**1919**

<b>K1-3</b>	<b>IT253-55</b>	<b>Tilling-Stevens</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>Ch??</b>
<b>K4-6</b>	<b>IT288-90</b>	<b>Tilling-Stevens</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>Ch??</b>
<b>K7</b>	<b>IT268</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>C26?D</b>

K1-K7 ex-War Department.  
 Withdrawn **unknown** (K1-K7).

**1924**

<b>B1-2</b>	<b>XW6188-89</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13134/33</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>
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No. B2 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered L54).  
 Withdrawn **1931** (B1).

**1925**

<b>B3</b>	<b>XX5044</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13226</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>
<b>B4</b>	<b>XX5043</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13228</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>
<b>B5</b>	<b>XX7447</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13306</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>
<b>B6</b>	<b>YL2136</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13309</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>

Withdrawn **1931** (B3-B6).



K7 (IT268) was a 1919 purchase from the War Department. It sports Birch Brothers coachwork on a Leyland chassis. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

**1927**

<b>B7</b>	<b>YH6292</b>	<b>Leyland LB5</b>	<b>13809</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>026/22R0</b>
<b>B8</b>	<b>YT6958</b>	<b>Dennis E</b>	<b>17221</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>B30R</b>
<b>B9-12</b>	<b>YU1015-18</b>	<b>Dennis E</b>	<b>17224/29-31</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>B30R</b>
<b>B13</b>	<b>YU8159</b>	<b>Dennis E</b>	<b>17234</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>B30R</b>
<b>K8-9</b>	<b>LX8658-59</b>	<b>Leyland S5</b>	<b>10126/42</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>Ch28</b>

Nos. B7-B13 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered L55, DE29-34 respectively).

No. K8-9 ex-Birch Bros. lorries (re-bodied May 1927).

Withdrawn **1932** (K8), **1933** (K9).

## 1928

B14-15	UC1945-46	Dennis E	17439/56	Birch	B30R
B16	UC8332	Dennis E	17386	Birch	B30R
B17	YV1227	Dennis E	17401	Birch	B30R
B18	XX1514	Daimler Y	6080	Hickman	042R0
B19	YX4400	Leyland PLSC3	47196	Birch	B32R
B20	XV1153	Leyland PLSC3	47152	Birch	B32R
B21	XP435	Leyland LB2	12641	Dodson	048R0
B22	XT4608	Leyland LB4	12716	Dodson	048R0
K10	YV1228	Leyland PLSC3	46382	Birch	C30R
K11	YV5499	Leyland PLSC	46384	Birch	C24R
K12	YW2793	Leyland PLSC3	46383	Birch	C30R
K13-14	YV5210-11	Albion PJ26	5062K/62L	Birch	C26D

Nos. B14-17 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered DE35-38 respectively).

No. B18 ex-Ingarfield & Bright, London (new 1925).

Nos. B19-20 converted to coaches as C30R; re-numbered K29-30 respectively in 1932.

Nos. B21-22 ex-Drake & McCowen, London (new 1923, 1924 respectively).

Nos. K10-14 re-numbered K25-27, K31-32 respectively in 1932.

Withdrawn **1929** (B18), **1930** (B21-22), **1934** (K11[K26], K13-14[K31-32]), **1935** (K10[K25], K12[K27], B19-20[K29-30]).



B17 (YV1227) was a 1928 Dennis E with Birch Brothers 30-seat bodywork. It passed to London Transport in 1934 where it was numbered DE38. (LTHL collection).

## 1929

B23	UL1966	Dennis E	17584	Birch	B30R
B24	UL4420	Dennis E	17606	Birch	B30R
B25	GU977	Dennis H	90061	Birch	H28/26RO
B26	GU6436	Dennis H	90064	Birch	H28/26RO
B27	UC1817	Maudslay ML3	4029	Hall Lewis	B32R
B28	UC1816	Maudslay ML3	4030	Hall Lewis	B32R
K15-16	UL1964-65	Leyland PLC1	47618-19	Birch	C24R
K17-18	UL4418-19	Leyland PLC1	47621-22	Birch	C24R
K19-20	GU2972-73	Gilford 1660T	10675/41	Birch	C30D
K21-22	UU1463-64	Gilford 1660T	10713/73	Birch	C30D
K23-24	UU1465-66	Gilford 1660T	10828/35	Birch	C30D

Nos. B23-26 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered DE39-40, DH10-11 respectively).

Nos. B27-28 ex-Brown, London (new 1928); re-seated to B30R in 1929.

Withdrawn **1931** (B27-28), **1935** (K15-16), **1936** (K22, K24), **1937** (K17), **1940** (K19, K21), **by 1941** (K18), **1945** (K20, K23).

**1930**

<b>B29</b>	<b>GK6431</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71492</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>
<b>B30</b>	<b>GK8660</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71764</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>

Nos. B29-30 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD74-75 respectively).

**1931**

<b>B31</b>	<b>GK9718</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71765</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>
<b>B32-33</b>	<b>GN4380-81</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71768/873</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>
<b>B34-35</b>	<b>GN5880-81</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71791/69</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>
<b>B36-37</b>	<b>G01525-26</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>71770-71</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>
<b>B38</b>	<b>GP7289</b>	<b>Leyland TD1</b>	<b>72214</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26RO</b>

Nos. B31-38 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD76-83 respectively).



B29 (GK6431), a 1930 Leyland TD1 with Birch Brothers 56-seat bodywork. It passed to London Transport in 1934 where it became TD74. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

## 1932

<b>B39-40</b>	<b>GX131-132</b>	<b>Leyland TD2</b>	<b>868-69</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>H30/26R</b>
<b>K28</b>	<b>YW6778</b>	<b>Leyland PLSC3</b>	<b>47195</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>C30?</b>
<b>K33</b>	<b>MT5714</b>	<b>Gilford 1660T</b>	<b>10681</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>C32?</b>
<b>K34</b>	<b>MY9115</b>	<b>Gilford 1660T</b>	<b>11003</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>C32?</b>
<b>K35</b>	<b>MY7225</b>	<b>Gilford 1660T</b>	<b>11221</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>C32?</b>

Nos. B39-40 to London Transport 2/34 (re-numbered TD85, TD84 respectively).

No. K28 ex-St. Albans & District (new 1928).

Nos. K33-35 ex-Beaumont Safeway Coaches, Enfield (new 1929, 1929 and 1930 respectively); K35 re-numbered K25 by 1938.

Withdrawn **1935** (K28, K33), **1936** (K34), **by 1941** (K35[K25]).

## 1934

<b>K36-39</b>	<b>AYH295-98</b>	<b>Leyland LT5A</b>	<b>4492-95</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC39C</b>
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Withdrawn **1946** (K36-39).



B40 (GX132), a 1932 Leyland TD2 with Birch Brothers 56-seat bodywork. It also passed to London Transport in 1934 where it became TD84. (courtesy Brian Townsend).

**1935**

<b>K40-42</b>	<b>BL0973-75</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>LT7</b>	<b>6555/54/51</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC39C</b>
<b>K43-45</b>	<b>BL0976-78</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>LT7</b>	<b>6552-53/56</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC39C</b>
<b>K46-49</b>	<b>CLA102-05</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>LT7</b>	<b>8913/12/14-15</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC39C</b>

No. K40 re-bodied by Birch in 1947.

Nos. K41, K43 fitted with Duple C35F bodies from Nos. K61, K63 respectively in 1949 and 1950 respectively. The Birch body from K43 was fitted to K62.

No. K42 was rebuilt by Birch to L48F in 1944 and re-numbered K142.

No. K44 was fitted with an ECW B35R body (from unknown source) c.1951.

Nos. K45-49 fitted with ECW B35R bodies from K81-85 in 1949. The body from K49 was fitted to K63.

Nos. K48-49 fitted with Thurgood C35F bodies from K96-97 in 1952 for disposal. The ECW B35R bodies from K48-49 were fitted to K96-97.

Withdrawn **1951** (K41, K42[K142], K43), **1952** (K40, K48-49), **1954** (K44-47).



K44 (BL0977), was a 1935 Leyland LT7 and is seen here with an ECW 35-seat body fitted c. 1951. It was withdrawn in 1954. (LTHL collection).



K46 (CLA102) was another 1935 Leyland LT7 re-bodied with an ECW 35-seat bus body in 1949, but with a lower destination box. (LTHL collection).

**1936**

<b>K50</b>	<b>CYU406</b>	<b>Leyland TS7T</b>	<b>11168</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC43C</b>
<b>K51</b>	<b>CYY192</b>	<b>Leyland TS7T</b>	<b>11167</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>FC43C</b>

Nos. K50-51 re-bodied by Birch to H34/30R in 1943 and re-numbered K150-151 respectively.

Withdrawn **1951** (K50[K150]), **1952** (K51[K151]).

**1937**

<b>K52-53</b>	<b>DXE872-73</b>	<b>Leyland TS7D</b>	<b>12545-46</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>B43F</b>
<b>K54-55</b>	<b>DXV175-76</b>	<b>Leyland TS7D</b>	<b>12548/47</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>B43F</b>

Nos. K52, K55 re-bodied by Birch to H34/30R in 1943/44 and re-numbered K152-153 respectively.

Withdrawn **1951** (K52[K152], K53, K55[K153]), **1952** (K54).



K50 (CYU406), a 1936 Leyland TS7T with Birch Brothers 43-seat full front coachwork. It was re-bodied by Birch in 1943 as a 64-seat double-decker and re-numbered K150. It was withdrawn in this form in 1951. (LTHL collection).

1938

K9	MJ2985	Ford BB	5250289	Thurgood	B20F
K10	EU4724	Ford AA	4792974	??	B20F
K11	MJ5264	Ford BB	5317917	Thurgood	B20F
K12	ATM274	Ford BB	3010968	Thurgood	FB26F
K15	MT2702	Gilford 166SD	10541	??	C25R
K16	PG8380	AJS Commodore	??	??	?30?
K17	UL9372	Gilford 1660T	10589	Thurgood	C31R
K18	MT2933	Gilford 1660T	10572	??	C32R
K27	NV5107	Commer B3	59013	??	FC26F
K28	VC6112	Maudslay ML7A	4799	??	B30?
K30	MJ4825	Dennis Ace	200206	??	B20F
K31	MJ2699	Dennis Lancet	170431	??	B32?
K32	BNM410	Dennis Lancet II	175328	??	B39?
K35	VD3510	Leyland LT5A	4248	Leyland	B32R
K56	CUC104	Bedford WTB	110251	??	B26R
K57	EXA822	Bedford WTB	111823	Birch	C25F
K58	EXF26	Bedford WTB	111762	Birch	C25F
K59	NV8311	Bedford WTB	110893	??	C26F
K60	NV3606	Leyland SKP	2695	Burlingham	C26F
K61-62	EX0694-95	Leyland LZ2A	200179/51	Birch	C36F
K63-65	EXX990-92	Leyland LZ2A	200211/42/12	Birch	C36F
K66	EXX993	Leyland LZ2A	200180	Birch	C36F

**1938 (continued)**

Nos. K9, K11-12 ex-Sunbeam, Gravenhurst (new 1933, 1934, 1936 respectively).

Nos. K10, K17 ex-Whitwell Bus Company, Whitwell (new 1931, 1929 respectively).

Nos. K16, K28 ex-Swallow Omnibus Company, Kempston (both new 1930).

Nos. K15, K18 ex-Pirton Belle, Pirton (new 1929).

No. K27 ex-Robinson, Rushden (new 1935).

Nos. K30-32, K56 ex-Perseverance, Shillington (new 1934, 1933, 1937, 1936 respectively).

No. K35 ex-Lanarkshire Traction Company (No. F114, new 1934); fitted with Duple C35F body from K62 in 1949; re-numbered K42 at the same time.

Nos. K57-58 re-seated to C26F at a later date.

No. K59 ex-Abbott & Sons, Rushden (new 1937).

No. K60 ex-Scroxtton, Rushden (new 1934).

Nos. K61-63 re-bodied to C35F by Duple in 1946; these bodies were fitted to K41-43 in 1949 being replaced with the bodies from K35[K42], K43-44 for disposal.

Withdrawn **1938** (K16), **1939** (K9-11, K15, K17-18), **1944** (K30), **1945** (K28, K31), **1946** (K12, K27, K32, K56, K60), **1948** (K59), **1949** (K57-58, K61-62, K64, K66), **1950** (K63, K65), **1951** (K35[K42]).

**1938 (continued)**

*The following vehicles were also acquired in 1938 from operators taken over. Most were not operated, but some may have entered service for a short while. None received Birch Brothers fleet numbers.*

-	EW6507	Gilford CP6	10775	Eaton	B20F
-	MY9869	GMC T60	60917	??	C26?
-	NH5868	Reo	??	??	B14?
-	TM4736	Ford AA	3731081	??	B20F
-	TM9630	Ford AA	4792070	Thurgood	B20F
-	UR6614	Ford AA	3013592	Thurgood	B20F
-	VC348	Chevrolet LQ	52446	??	C14F
-	VX1448	Chevrolet LQ	56006	??	B14?
-	W04600	Chevrolet	??	??	B14?

MY9869, NH5868, W04600 ex-Pirton Belle, Pirton (new 1929, 1924, 1930 respectively).

TM4736 ex-Twydell, Shillington (new 1930).

TM9630 ex-Sunbeam, Gravenhurst (new 1931).

EW6507, VC348 ex-Swallow Omnibus Company, Kempston (new 1930, 1929 respectively).

UR6614, VX1448 ex-Whitwell Bus Company, Whitwell (new 1930, 1929 respectively). All were withdrawn in 1938.



K58 (EXF26), a 1938 Bedford WTB with Birch 25-seat coachwork. It remained in service until 1949. (LTHL collection).

**1940**

<b>K170</b>	<b>GGT184</b>	<b>Leyland TD7</b>	<b>306839</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>L27/28R</b>
<b>K171</b>	<b>GGK328</b>	<b>Leyland TD7</b>	<b>306840</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>L27/28R</b>

No. K170 re-bodied to L27/26R by Barnard in 1949 after being damaged by fire in 1946.

Withdrawn **1949** (K171), **1960** (K170).

**1945**

<b>K34</b>	<b>HE6329</b>	<b>Leyland LT5A</b>	<b>4049</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B32F</b>
<b>K101-103</b>	<b>GYL981-83</b>	<b>Guy Arab II</b>	<b>FD27533/30/50</b>	<b>Weymann</b>	<b>L27/28R</b>
<b>K104</b>	<b>GYL184</b>	<b>Guy Arab II</b>	<b>FD27563</b>	<b>Weymann</b>	<b>L27/28R</b>

No. K34 ex-Yorkshire Traction (No. 416, new 1934); fitted with ECW B35R body from K80 in 1949.

Withdrawn **1951** (K34, K101-104).



K170 (CGT184) was a 1940 Leyland TD7 originally with Birch Brothers own bodywork but re-bodied by Barnard in 1949 which enabled it to survive in the fleet until 1960. (LTHL collection).

**1946**

<b>K80</b>	<b>HUW780</b>	<b>Leyland PS1</b>	<b>461045</b>	<b>ECW</b>	<b>B35R</b>
<b>K180-181</b>	<b>HLY480-81</b>	<b>Leyland PD1</b>	<b>460441-42</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>L28/25F</b>
<b>K182</b>	<b>HLY482</b>	<b>Leyland PD1</b>	<b>451836</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>L28/25F</b>
<b>K183-184</b>	<b>HLY483-84</b>	<b>Leyland PD1</b>	<b>460694-95</b>	<b>Birch</b>	<b>L28/25F</b>

No. K80 re-bodied to C33F by Windover in 1949.

Nos. K180-183 re-bodied to H30/26R by MCCW in 1956 or 1957 (K182).

Withdrawn **1957** (K184), **1958** (K80), **1965** (K180, K183), **1966** (K181), **1967** (K182).

## 1947

K20-21	HYP720-21	Bedford OB	55805/61710	Duple	C29F
K22-23	HYP722-23	Bedford OB	47814/50760	Duple	C29F
K24-25	HYP724-25	Bedford OB	71412/81218	Duple	C29F
K81-83	HUW781-83	Leyland PS1	462416/59/664	ECW	B35R
K84-85	HUW784-85	Leyland PS1	462985/3043	ECW	B35R
K185-187	HLY485-87	Leyland PD1	460822/696/827	Birch	L28/25F
K188-189	HLY488-89	Leyland PD1	460826/28	Birch	L28/25F

Nos. K81-85 re-bodied to C33F by Windover in 1949.

Nos. K187-189 re-bodied to H30/26R by MCCW in 1956 (K189) and 1957.

Withdrawn **1949** (K20), **1950** (K21-25), **1956** (K82-83), **1957** (K81, K84-85), **1958** (K185-186), **1966** (K189), **1967** (K187-188).

## 1948

K90-92	JXT490-92	Leyland PS1/1	481867/997/2502	ECW	FC31R
K93-95	JXT493-95	Leyland PS1/1	482621/70-1	ECW	FC31R
K96-97	JXT496-97	Leyland PS1/1	482013/3104	Thurgood	C35F

Nos. K96-97 fitted with ECW B35R bodies from K48-49 in 1952.

Withdrawn **1954** (K96-97), **1958** (K90-91, K95), **1959** (K92-94).



K90 (JXT490) was a 1948 Leyland PS1/1 with ECW 31-seat full-front coachwork. (LTHL collection).

**1949**

<b>K26</b>	<b>KGT426</b>	<b>Bedford OB</b>	<b>99998</b>	<b>Duple</b>	<b>C29F</b>
<b>K70</b>	<b>KXU670</b>	<b>Leyland CP01</b>	<b>490039</b>	<b>Windover</b>	<b>C32F</b>
<b>K98-99</b>	<b>JXT498-99</b>	<b>Leyland PS1/1</b>	<b>493295/5572</b>	<b>Windover</b>	<b>C35F</b>

No. K70 re-seated to C34F at a later date.  
Withdrawn **1950** (K26), **1957** (K98-99), **1961** (K70).

**1950**

<b>K71-73</b>	<b>KXU671-73</b>	<b>Leyland CP01</b>	<b>493846/655/800</b>	<b>Windover</b>	<b>C32F</b>
<b>K74-75</b>	<b>KXU674-75</b>	<b>Leyland CP01</b>	<b>493663/874</b>	<b>Windover</b>	<b>C32F</b>

Nos. K71-75 re-seated to C34F at a later date.  
Withdrawn **1955** (K75), **1956** (K73), **1960** (K74), **1962** (K71-72).



K71 (KXU671), a 1950 Leyland CP01 Comet with Windover 32-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

## 1951

K20-21	LXM20-21	Leyland	PSU1/13	501537/618	Windover	C39C
K22-23	LXM22-23	Leyland	PSU1/13	510752/1424	Windover	C39C
K24-25	LXM24-25	Leyland	PSU1/13	511426-27	Windover	C39C
K26	MLF726	Leyland	PSU1/13	511425	Windover	C39F
K210-212	LXV210-12	Guy Arab	III	FD70060/40/56	Willowbrook	FH27/26F
K213-215	LXV213-15	Guy Arab	III	FD70059/70/354	Willowbrook	FH27/26F
K220	LXV220	Leyland	PD1A	494838	Willowbrook	FH27/26F
K221-223	LXV221-23	Leyland	PS1/4	504555-57	Willowbrook	FH27/26F

Nos. K210-215 carried the names John Churchill, Charles Churchill, William Cadogan, Adam de Cordonnel, Sidney Godolphin, Prince Eugene respectively.

K220-223 carried the names Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenards, Malplaquet respectively.

Withdrawn **1960** (K220-223), **1961** (K22-24, K26), **1962** (K20-21, K25, K210, K214), **1963** (K211-213, K215).



K210 (LXV210), a 1951 Guy Arab III with Willowbrook full-front 53-seat bodywork. It carried the name John Churchill. (LTHL collection).

**1952**

<b>K12</b>	<b>PKL812</b>	<b>Leyland-Beadle</b>	<b>JCB318</b>	<b>Beadle</b>	<b>C35F</b>
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No. K12 ex-Beadle demonstrator, constructed from Leyland units ex-K171 (GGK328).

Withdrawn **1957** (K12).

**1954**

<b>K30</b>	<b>PLA830</b>	<b>AEC Reliance</b>	<b>MU3RV273</b>	<b>Park Royal</b>	<b>C41C</b>
<b>K160</b>	<b>EFJ235</b>	<b>Leyland TD5</b>	<b>300633</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H29/26R</b>
<b>K161-162</b>	<b>EFJ161-62</b>	<b>Leyland TD5</b>	<b>300333-34</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H29/26R</b>
<b>K163</b>	<b>EFJ236</b>	<b>Leyland TD5</b>	<b>300634</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H29/26R</b>

Nos. K160-163 ex-Exeter Corporation (Nos. 20, 61-62, 21 respectively, all new 1938).

Withdrawn **1955** (K161-163), **1957** (K160), **1966** (K30).

**1955**

<b>K60-65</b>	<b>PYK60-65</b>	<b>Beadle-Commer</b>	<b>TS3 JCB641-46</b>	<b>Beadle</b>	<b>C41F</b>
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Withdrawn **1964** (K60, K62-65), **1966** (K61).



K30 (PLA830), was a solitary AEC Reliance dating from 1954. It carried Park Royal 41-seat centre-entrance coachwork. (LTHL collection).



K61 (PYK61) was one of 6 Beadle-Commer TS3 rebuilds purchased in 1955 - it carried Beadle 41-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

**1956**

K31-33	RYT31-33	AEC Reliance	MU3RV746-48	Weymann	C41F
K34-36	RYT34-36	AEC Reliance	MU3RV1158-60	Weymann	C41F
K66	SLP10	Beadle-Commer	TS3 JCB699	Beadle	C41F

Withdrawn **1963** (K35), **1965** (K66), **1966** (K31-34, K36).

**1958**

K10	UYW10	Bedford SB8	62099	Duple	C37F
K40-41	UYT40-41	AEC Reliance	MU3RV1020-21	Park Royal	B45F
K67	TKT933	Beadle-Commer	TS3 JCB376	Beadle	C41F

No. K10 re-seated to C36F at a later date.

No. K67 ex-Beadle demonstrator.

Withdrawn **1959** (K67), **1967** (K10), **1969** (K40-41).

**1959**

K11-12	WJJ11-12	Bedford SB8	67161/77	Duple	C41F
K42	WLW42	AEC Reliance	2MU3RV2452	Park Royal	B45F
K50-52	WXR50-52	Leyland PSUC1/2	594436-37/44	Willowbrook	C41F

Nos. K11-12 re-seated to C36F at a later date.

Withdrawn **1967** (K11), **1968** (K12), **1969** (K42, K50-52).

**1960**

K13-15	YYT13-15	Bedford SB1	79470/96/500	Duple	C41F
K16-18	YYT16-18	Bedford SB1	79572/612/888	Duple	C41F
K43	YYX43	AEC Reliance	2MU3RA2457	Duple	C43F
K44	44AUW	AEC Reliance	2MU3RA2422	Willowbrook	C41F

Withdrawn **1969** (K13-18), **1970** (K43-44).

**1961**

K45-48	45-48AUW	AEC Reliance	2MU3RA3606-09	Willowbrook	C41F
K80-81	80-81CYV	Leyland L2	602898-99	Duple	C41F

Withdrawn **1970** (K45-48, K80-81).



K18 (YYT18), a 1960 Bedford SB1 with Duple 41-seat bodywork - one of six similar vehicles entering service that year. All were withdrawn in 1969. (LTHL collection).



K80 (80CYV), a 1961 Leyland L2 Leopard with Duple Britannia 41-seat bodywork. (LTHL collection).

**1962**

<b>K19-20</b>	<b>19-20ELH</b>	<b>Bedford SB8</b>	<b>88949/72</b>	<b>Duple</b>	<b>C41F</b>
<b>K82-84</b>	<b>82-84CYV</b>	<b>Leyland PSU3/3R</b>	<b>620832-33/51</b>	<b>Willowbrook</b>	<b>DP51F</b>

No. K84 re-bodied to DP51F by Plaxton in 1969.  
Withdrawn **1969** (K19-20, K82-84).

**1963**

<b>K90-95</b>	<b>90-95FXD</b>	<b>Leyland PSU3/4R</b>	<b>629751-56</b>	<b>Park Royal</b>	<b>C49F</b>
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Withdrawn **1969** (K90-95).

**1964**

<b>K25-29</b>	<b>ALD25-29B</b>	<b>AEC Reliance</b>	<b>2MU4RA5406-10</b>	<b>Harrington</b>	<b>C41F</b>
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Withdrawn **1971** (K25-29).

**1965**

**K70-73    DUC70-73C    Leyland PSU3/4R    L40097-100    Marshall    C49F**

Withdrawn **1969** (K70-73).

**1966**

**K6M-7M    FML517-18B    Bedford SB13    94773/494    Duple    C41F**

**K8M    JNK687C    Bedford SB5    95561    Duple    C41F**

**K9M    EAA168D    Bedford VAM14    6806547    Duple    C45F**

**K21-22    KHM21-22D    Bedford VAL14    6824192/6822    Duple    C45F**

**K23-24    KHM23-24D    Bedford VAL14    687886/9120    Duple    C45F**

Nos. K6M-K9M ex-Monico Motorways (new 1964, 1964, 1965, 1966 respectively).  
Withdrawn **1970** (K6M-K9M), **1971** (K21-24).

**1967**

**K30-31    NYM30-31E    Bedford VAM14    7802669/3286    Plaxton    C45F**

Withdrawn **1971** (K30-31).



In 1966 Birch Brothers purchased 4 Bedford VAL14 chassis with Duple 45-seat coachwork. This is K22 (KHM22D), retained for the coaching side of the business until 1971 when it was disposed of. (LTHL collection).

**1969**

<b>K35-38</b>	<b>VL35-38G</b>	<b>Bedford VAM70</b>	<b>457139/62775</b>	<b>Plaxton</b>	<b>C45F</b>
<b>K37-38</b>	<b>VL37-38G</b>	<b>Bedford VAM70</b>	<b>62783/935</b>	<b>Plaxton</b>	<b>C45F</b>

Nos. K35-38 to George Ewer Group 2/71.

**1970**

<b>K60-64</b>	<b>BUL60-64H</b>	<b>Seddon Pennine IV</b>	<b>47296-300</b>	<b>Plaxton</b>	<b>C45F</b>
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Nos. K60-64 to George Ewer Group 2/71.



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