

Heybrook Bay Motor Services Ltd

Coombes (Plymouth) Ltd t/a Princess Tours 1949-1958



1943 - 1958

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Cover Illustration: MOD688 was a 1951 Bedford SB with Brush C33F coachwork. It was sold in May 1956 and passed through a number of operators, ending life with Williamson of Shrewsbury as seen here. (LTHL collection).

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Heybrook Bay Motor Services Ltd was established in 1943 to take over the business of J W. Newton & Sons who had been trading as Star Motors since 1922. The new company inherited three buses and a service from Heybrook Bay to East Street in Plymouth and some school contract work. With World War II still continuing, the new owner, Thomas Hart, was still away on active service and the Newton family continued to run the business until his return. The livery applied was maroon, red and cream, later changed to red and cream.

A new utility Bedford OB was allocated to the company in 1944, which enabled one of the older vehicles to be withdrawn and with the cessation of hostilities in 1945 Thomas Hart returned to take full control of the company. Prior to the War he had owned a holiday camp at Wembury Point, which was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and he expected it to be returned to him. However the Navy decided to retain it as a gunnery school and so Mr Hart was forced to concentrate solely on the bus business.

A new garage was constructed in Down Thomas with fuel pumps to supply the public and a house erected behind the garage for the Hart family.

Now that wartime restrictions had been eased, the travelling public were looking for ways to get away and most travelled by road transport. Heybrook Bay Motor Services sought to capture some of the private hire

work now on offer. Thomas Hart acquired the business run by Mrs S. Coombes of Plymouth who ran a small two coach fleet on private hire and excursions under the name Princess Tours. A new company Coombes (Plymouth) Ltd was formed to take over the licences, giving Thomas Hart a base in Plymouth. Only one coach was taken over but two new Bedford coaches were ordered to boost the fleet. An office in Tavistock Road, Plymouth was opened where bookings for tours, excursions and private hire work could be taken. From 1954 just two coaches were licensed and in 1958 with the opening of the Bretonside Bus Station the booking office was re-located there, adjacent to the Heybrook Bay stand.

By 1947 the movement of service personnel between the former holiday camp at Wembury Point began to increase as time went on and from two journeys a day the frequency was increased to seven journeys daily diverted from the main route to serve the Naval School.

School work also continued and the original contract between Plymstock, Down Thomas and Wembury, which had come with the business was supplemented in 1948 by additional contracts; from Heybrook Bay to Hooe Primary School and Plympton Grammar School to Wembury. An additional vehicle was required on the latter service between Ermington and the Grammar School because of the numbers of schoolchildren using the service.

In the early part of the 1950's there were a large number of National Servicemen at Devonport Naval Barracks wanting to travel on long or short weekend leave passes. The trains were at inconvenient times and so groups of servicemen began to hire coaches for travel. The main operator involved was Blakes Tours of Plymouth and as trips became regular they were granted licences to run express services to Birmingham, Portsmouth and London, and later to Liverpool, Sheffield, Penzance and Swansea. As the number of passengers grew, Blakes were forced to hire other operators to help keep services running and this is where Heybrook Bay Motor Services became involved. Mr Hart then decided to apply for licences himself but was unsuccessful, although eventually the Traffic Commissioners granted licences to three operators, Blakes, Western National and Heybrook Bay to operate the Birmingham, Liverpool and Portsmouth services.

A service to Bovisand Bay from Staddiscombe was introduced in the summer of 1952 and a licence for eight peak hour journeys a day from Plymouth was granted. Duplicates were operated at busy times, some direct to Bovisand non-stop. When quiet, a shuttle service operated between Staddiscombe and Bovisand Bay to connect with the Plymouth-Heybrook Bay service.

In 1953 the terminus in East Street was moved due to reconstruction work and Heybrook Bay services departed from an improvised terminus in the

Buckwell Street Car Park. A Sundays only express service was inaugurated for Plymouth passengers visiting Langdon Court, a convalescent home between Down Thomas and Wembury, with just a single journey in each direction timed to coincide with the visiting hours. This was eventually replaced by the normal service bus, which was diverted to serve the home.

The new Bretonside Bus Station opened in March 1958 and Heybrook Bay Motor Services were allocated a stand - the only independent operator to run into Plymouth daily.

Thomas Hart suffered a heart attack in late 1958 and was advised to reduce his workload and so the decision was made to sell the Company.

On 1 January 1959 the local services, the share in the forces express services and Princess Tours' excursions and private hire licences passed to Western National Omnibus Company, bringing the short 15 year history of the Heybrook Bay Motor Services to a close. Just one of the vehicles passed to Western National, all the others were disposed of by Mr & Mrs Hart themselves.

Bus Fleet List 1943-1958

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

1943

JY6332	Bedford WLB	110078	Duple	B20F
JY9486	Bedford WTB	110926	Waveney?	B20F
BC0510	Bedford WTB	1924	Waveney?	B24F

JY6332, JY9486, BC0510 ex-J Newton & Sons Ltd (Star Motor Services), new 1935, 1937, 1938 respectively; BC0510 also quoted as B20F.
Withdrawn 1944 (JY6332), 1951 (JY9486, BC0510).

1944

CDR780	Bedford OWB	17878	Duple	B32F
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Withdrawn 1952 (CDR780).



BC0510 was a 1938 Bedford WTB with Waveney? 24-seat bodywork, that was one of three vehicles acquired with the business of Star Motors in 1943. (LTHL collection via Roger Grimley).

1945

CDR940 Bedford OWB 24202 Duple B32F

Withdrawn 1954 (CDR940).

1946

DC099 Bedford OB 19816 Duple C29F

Withdrawn 1954 (DC099).

1947

OMY837 Bedford OB 58349 Pearson C26F

Withdrawn 1954 (OMY387).

1948

KTA17	Bedford OB	83467	Duple	C29F
EDR345	Bedford OB	87039	Duple	C29F

Withdrawn 1959 (KTA17, EDR345).

1949

FC0111	Bedford OB	114217	Mulliner	C28F
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Withdrawn 1959 (FC0111).

1951

MTA917	Bedford OB	147355	Duple	C29F
MOD541	Bedford SB	1735	Duple	C33F
MOD688	Bedford SB	1220	Brush	C33F

Withdrawn 1956 (MOD688), 1959 (MTA917, MOD541).

1952

XMT624 Leyland PSU1/19 511333 Burlingham C41C

Withdrawn 1959 (XMT624).

1954

FHS486	Bedford SB	6105	Duple	C33F
PDV557	Bedford SB0	26362	Duple	C36F
RTA97	Bedford SB0	26978	Duple	B39F

FHS486 ex-Hutchinson, Overtown (new 1952).

PDV557 to Western National Omnibus Company 1/59; numbered 3825.

Withdrawn 1959 (FHS486, RTA97).

1955

LCV280	Tilling-Stevens K6MA7	9482	Theale	C33F
KJY204-05	Commer Avenger III	T85A0137/41	Duple	C41F

LCV280 ex-Stephens, Gunnislake (new 1949).
 Withdrawn 1958 (LCV280), 1959 (KJY204-205).

1956

LJY558	Bedford SBG	47161	Duple	C41F
LJY584	Commer Avenger III	T85A0281	Duple	C41F

Withdrawn 1958 (LJY558), 1959 (LJY584).

1957

MVA832	Bedford SB0	34517	Duple	B40F
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MVA832 ex-Hutchinson, Overtown (new 1955).
 Withdrawn 1959 (MVA832).



LJY584, seen here after disposal in 1959 with Marchwood Motorways, was a 1956 Commer Avenger III with Duple 41-seat coachwork. (LTHL collection).



Now with Safeway of South Petherton is MVA832, a 1955 Bedford SBO with Duple Midland B40F bodywork, new to Hutchinson of Overtown, it spent just 2 years with Heybrook Bay. (LTHL collection).

**Coombes (Plymouth) Ltd.
t/a Princess Tours
Coach Fleet List
1949-1958**

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

1949

MMP808 Bedford OB 37245 Duple C29F

MMP808 ex-Taylor, Caterham (new 1946).
Withdrawn 1958 (MMP808).

1950

LOD533 Bedford OB 141311 Duple C29F

Withdrawn 1954 (LOD533).

1951

NTA32 Bedford SB 3551 Duple C33F

Withdrawn 1959 (NTA32).



LOD533, was a 1950 Bedford OB with Duplex 29-seat coachwork, new to Princess Tours, but seen here after disposal in 1959 with Jones. (LTHL collection).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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Photographs courtesy Roger Grimley.

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