

Gibson Brothers (Barlestone) Ltd

Comfort Omnibus Services



1919 - 1982

Contents

Gibson Brothers (Barlestone) Ltd	- Fleet History 1919-1982	Page 3
	- Bus Fleet List 1919-1982	Page 7

Cover Illustration: No. 69 (PUT617G) was a 1969 Bedford VAM70 with Willowbrook DP45F bodywork. (Alan Snatt).

© The Local Transport History Library 2025. (www.lthlibrary.org.uk)
For personal use only. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without the express written permission of the publisher. In all cases this notice must remain intact. All rights reserved.

PDF-297-1

Brothers, Walter and Edward Harold Gibson were no strangers to the motorbus. Their father had operated a carrier's cart into Leicester at the beginning of the 1900's and shortly before the Great War had invested in a motor bus which the brothers drove in their off-duty hours to and from the local colliery where they worked. Unfortunately the vehicle had to be given up due to the onset of the War.

In 1919, once hostilities had ceased, the two brothers obtained another vehicle, which is thought to have been a lorry fitted with a convertible bus body and resumed their pre-war service continuing to transport miners to local collieries between shifts. Apparently the bus was so unreliable and underpowered that passengers often had to alight and give it a helping hand! It was also uncomfortable and apparently earned the nickname 'Old Misery'. Shortly afterwards a second bus was acquired which turned out to be more reliable and comfortable and was nicknamed 'Comfort', which is said to have inspired their fleet name.

Now that they had two buses, each brother could drive one full-time and they decided to give up their miners' jobs and concentrate on their new business.

The registered office was on New Street, Barlestone but in 1921 a garage on Barton Road, Barlestone, was established, following which the business began to expand with services ferrying workers to local collieries and

to the boot and shoe and hosiery factories in Barwell and Earl Shilton.

In 1922 they inaugurated a service between Barlestone and the 'Blue Boar', Southgate Street, Leicester, which operated on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday only and ran via Newbold Verdon and Desford. As a result there was a gradual increase in the size of the fleet. Although the fleet name 'Comfort' was adopted early on, the service was initially advertised on timetables as the 'Gibson Brothers, Motor Bus Service'.

By 1928 the route also took in the villages of Carlton, Barton and Nailstone, terminating at Castle Street and was running seven days a week. It was now being advertised as 'Gibson's Comfort Bus Service'. The route was later extended further to commence in Market Bosworth.

The first ticketing system used was the Bell Punch system of pre-printed tickets that were punched according to the destination although this was later superseded by the Setright system.

In the 1930s, Gibson Brothers came to an amicable arrangement with the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Company (better known as 'Midland Red') which left the brothers without competition between Market Bosworth and Desford on their service to Leicester, except for one journey on Wednesdays and Saturdays which Midland Red worked through on their Tamworth service.

Mr TH Mills, then with Trent Motor Traction Company, was appointed as managing director in 1931 to look after the business, a position he retained until the sale of the company in 1979, although latterly in an advisory capacity only.

By the 1950's an additional service between Market Bosworth and Leicester via Peckleton was being operated; the services were advertised as 'Gibson Brothers' Comfort Omnibus Services', a title that they used until the end.

There were now two services being operated between Market Bosworth and Leicester; one along the original route through Carlton, Barton and Nailstone and the other was via Cadeby, Kirby Muxloe and Peckleton with both services joining at Desford and following a common route into Leicester, although the final part of the route into Leicester operated on the main Hinckley-Leicester road which carried a frequent Midland Red service. These remained the main stage carriage services operated throughout the life of the business, although a Friday only service between Newbold and Coalville was operated with four journey's daily, but this was later withdrawn.

In 1963 long time rival Browns Blue was taken over by Midland Red and their entire stock of Setright ticket machines was purchased by the Gibson Brothers as well as one of their vehicles. This enabled the

antiquated Bell Punch system to be dispensed with.

In July 1964 the business was incorporated as Gibson Brothers (Barlestone) Ltd.

The last double-deck vehicle was withdrawn in 1968 as passenger loadings decreased and the coaching side of the business became more profitable. Thereafter only single-deck vehicles were purchased. Until 1971 mainly dual purpose vehicles were acquired that could be used on private hires and excursions as well as on the stage carriage routes. From 1972 onwards, however, only coaches were added to the fleet.

In 1979 with Walter Gibson, the last remaining partner, reaching retirement age and no-one prepared to take over the business it was decided to offer it for sale. In August 1979 Gibson Brothers Ltd was purchased by Leicester City Transport, who kept the business as a subsidiary until October 1982 when it was merged with the main fleet bringing the separate operating existence of Gibson Brothers to an end, although a few buses and coaches continued to appear in Gibson livery with Gibson fleetname for a short while after, but these were owned and operated by Leicester City Transport.

Bus Fleet List 1919-1982

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

1919

It is thought that two vehicles were purchased prior to the stage carriage service commencing in 1922. Their first vehicle is stated to have had a 'convertible body fitted to a lorry' (Commercial Motor Archive 4 May 1956) but no further details have emerged.

1922

NR1732	Oldsmobile	T15300	??	B14F
---------------	-------------------	---------------	-----------	-------------

Withdrawn **1924** (NR1732).

1923

NR2617	GMC K16	17795	Insley?	B20F
---------------	----------------	--------------	----------------	-------------

Coachwork thought to be by Insley, a local coachbuilder situated in Insley's Lane, Shackerstone, Leicestershire.

Withdrawn **1926** (NR2617).

1924

NR3828	GMC K16	20726	??	B20F
NR4624	GMC K16	20713	??	B14F
NR5006	AEC 202	202075	??	B26?

Withdrawn **unknown** (NR5006), **1928** (NR3828), **1929** (NR4624).

1925

NR6634	AEC505	505035	??	B???
---------------	---------------	---------------	-----------	-------------

Withdrawn **1931** (NR6634).



NR2617 was a 1923 GMC K16, thought to have 20-seat coachwork by Insley, who were based at Shackerstone, a village close to Barlestone. (LTHL collection/unknown).

1926

NR7819	Maudslay ML4	3797	Willowbrook B26R
NR8650	AEC 414	414046	?? B24?

Withdrawn **1929** (NR7819), **1934** (NR8650).

1927

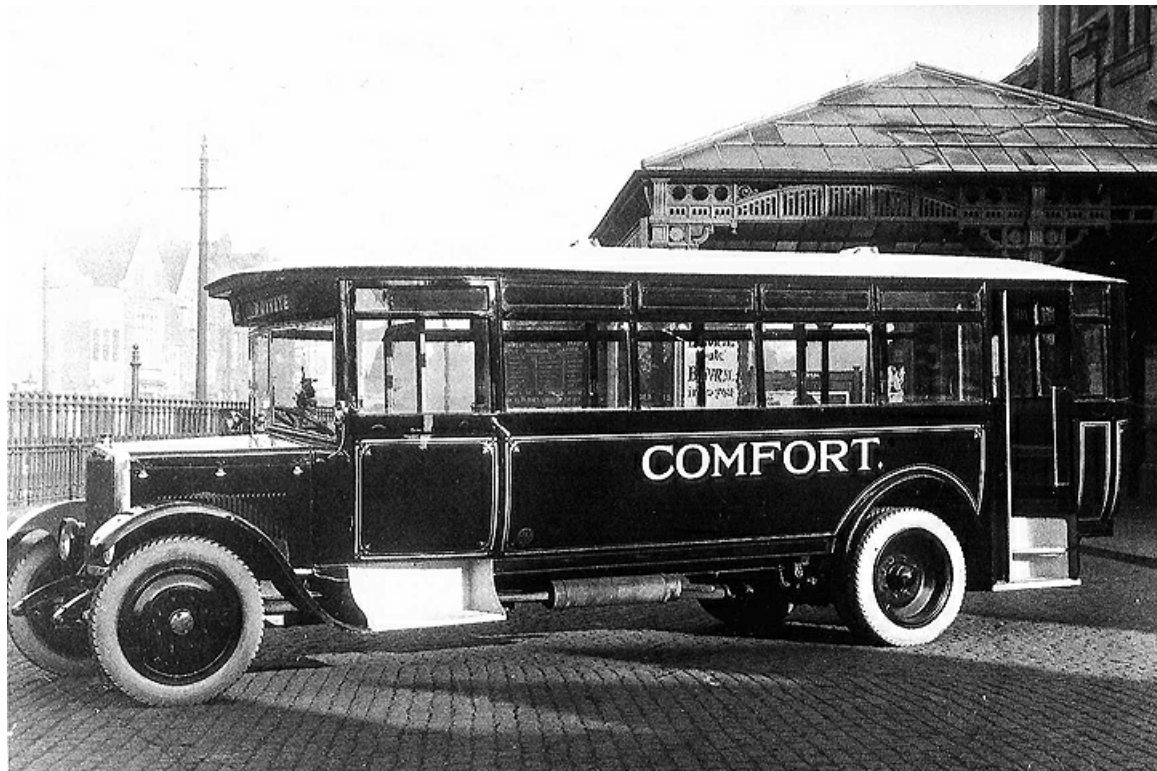
UT496	AEC 414	414027	Willowbrook B26F
UT1488	ADC 416D	416059D	Willowbrook B32D

Withdrawn **1933** (UT496), **1934** (UT1488).

1928

UE5412	REO	??	Bracebridge B14F
UT3176	ADC 423	423036	Willowbrook B32?
UT4126	ADC 416	416663	Willowbrook B32?

Withdrawn **unknown** (UE5412), **1934** (UT3176), **1937** (UT4126).



NR7819 was a 1926 Maudslay ML4 with Willowbrook 26-seat coachwork. It only spent a short time with Gibson's, being withdrawn in 1929. (Bus Archive).

1929

UT6058	Maudslay ML3B	4758	Willowbrook B32?
UT6191	AEC 426	426064	Willowbrook B32?

Withdrawn **unknown** (UT6191), **1939** (UT6058).

1930

NR3826	GMC K16	21010	?? B20?
UT7635	Maudslay ML3BC	4899	Willowbrook B32F

NR3826 ex-Rudin & Son, Ibstock (new 1924).
Withdrawn **1931** (NR3826), **1948** (UT7635).

1931

UT8212	Maudslay ML3BC	4907	Willowbrook B32?
UT9050	Maudslay ML3E	4996	Willowbrook B32F
UT9535	Maudslay ML3E	5004	Willowbrook B32F

Withdrawn **1940** (UT9535), **1942** (UT9050), **1943** (UT8212).

1932

11	JU1475	AEC Regal	642024	Willowbrook B32F
-----------	---------------	------------------	---------------	-------------------------

Withdrawn **1952** (11).

1934

12	JU3839	Maudslay ML3J	5135	Willowbrook B32F
-----------	---------------	----------------------	-------------	-------------------------

Withdrawn **1950** (12).

1935

14	JU5650	Maudslay SP40	5206	Willowbrook DP40F
-----------	---------------	----------------------	-------------	--------------------------

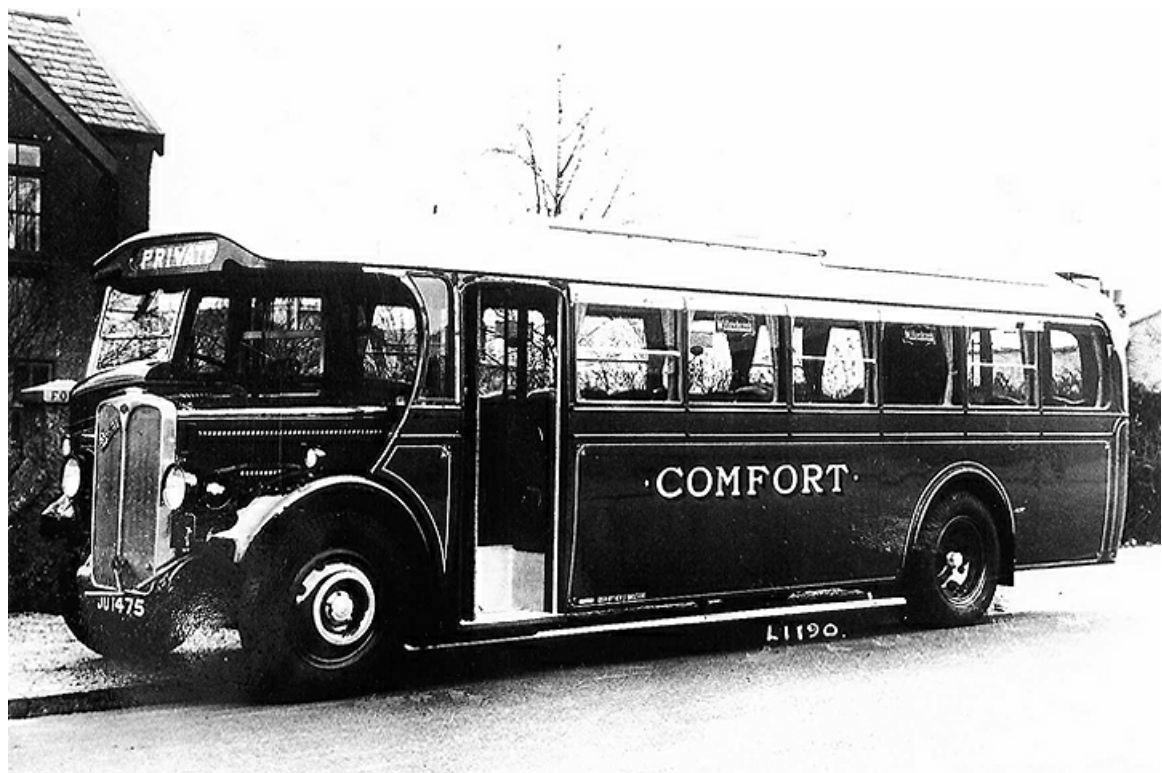
Withdrawn **1958** (14).

1936

15	JU8809	Maudslay SF40	5312	Willowbrook DP36C
-----------	---------------	----------------------	-------------	--------------------------

16	JU9209	Bedford WTB	110726	Willowbrook C25F
-----------	---------------	--------------------	---------------	-------------------------

Withdrawn **1949** (16), **1956** (15).



No. 11 (JU1475) was a 1932 AEC Regal with Willowbrook 32-seat bodywork. (Bus Archive).

1937

17	AAY518	Maudslay SF40	5378	Willowbrook DP36C
18	AJU680	Maudslay SF40	5379	Willowbrook DP36C

Withdrawn **1954** (17), **1957** (18).

1938

19	BAY287	Bedford WTB	112430	Willowbrook C26F
-----------	---------------	--------------------	---------------	-------------------------

Withdrawn **1954** (19).

1939

20	BNR390	Maudslay SF40	6014P	Willowbrook DP36C
21	BNR779	Maudslay SF40	6015P	Willowbrook DP36C
22	JU8617	Maudslay SF40	5273	Burlingham C35F

No. 22 ex-Triumph Coaches (Potter Bros), Shepshed (new 1936).
 Withdrawn **1952** (22), **1953** (20), **1956** (21).



No. 21 (BNR779), a 1939 Maudslay 'Magna' SF40 with Willowbrook 36-seat dual-purpose bodywork. (LTHL collection/unknown).

1942

2	JU6872	Bedford WTL	876997	Willowbrook	C25F
4	RB1294	AEC Regal	662024	WJ Smith	B32F
	CNR241	Bedford OWB	10190	Roe	B32F
	UT7300	Bristol B	B615	Bristol	B32F
	UT9104	Bedford WHG	103148	Willowbrook	B14F

Nos. 2, 4 ex-The Astley, Broughton Astley (new 1930, 1935 respectively)
 UT7300, UT9104 ex-The Astley, Broughton Astley (new 1930 [to Brown Bros,
 Sapcote as B31D], 1931 respectively).

Withdrawn **1944** (UT7300), **1946** (UT9104), **1949** (2, CNR241), **1951** (4).

1943

6	CNR454	Bedford OWB	12226	Roe	B32F
	TF5779	Leyland LT5	119	Leyland	B32F

TF5779 ex- Parkinson, Leyland (new 1931 as Leyland demonstrator).

Withdrawn **unknown** (TF5779), **1949** (6).

1948

23	TH7165	Maudslay SF40	5319	Burlingham	DP36F
24	EUT282	Maudslay Marathon 3	70151	Burlingham	C33F
25	EUT896	Maudslay Marathon 3	70240	Burlingham	C33F

No. 23 ex-Browns Blue Coaches, Markfield (new 1936 to LCW Motor Services, Llandilo).

Withdrawn **unknown** (23), **1960** (25), **1961** (24).

1949

5	DRY778	Bedford OWB	19536	Roe	B32F
26	FJU350	Maudslay Marathon 3	70295	Quorn	C32F
27	JF5879	Leyland TD3	4630	MCCW	H26/24R
28	JF5892	Leyland TD3	4642	MCCW	H26/24R
29-30	FNR597-98	Crossley DD42/7	94862/61	Strachans	H30/26R
	DRY537	Bedford OWB	10248	Duple	B32F

Quorn Coachwork was a trading name of Crawford Prince-Johnson, coach-builders of Melton Road, Queniborough, Leicestershire.

No. 5, DRY537 ex-Cleaver, Leicester (new 1944, 1942 respectively).

Nos. 27-28 ex-Leicester City Tpt (Nos. 276, 289 respectively; new 1934).

Withdrawn **1949** (DRY537), **1953** (5), **1955** (27), **1957** (28), **1959** (26), **1962** (29-30).



No. 24 (EUT282), was a 1948 Maudslay Marathon III with Willowbrook 33-seat coachwork. (Bus Archive).



1949 saw the introduction of Gibson Brothers' first double-deck vehicles. This is No. 28 (JF5892), a second-hand acquisition from Leicester Corporation. Dating from 1934 it carried a Metro-Cammell 50-seat body. (Bus Archive).

1951

31	GUT988	Leyland PSU1/11	510079	Burlingham	C39C
32	HAY849	Leyland PD2/12	514580	Leyland	H32/26RD

Withdrawn **1963** (31), **1968** (32).

1952

33	HJU524	Leyland PSU1/11	520380	Leyland	C41C
-----------	---------------	------------------------	---------------	----------------	-------------

Withdrawn **1963** (33).

1953

34	HGF938	Daimler CWA6	12889	Park Royal	H30/26R
-----------	---------------	---------------------	--------------	-------------------	----------------

No. 34 ex-London Transport (No. D261; new 1946).
Withdrawn **1960** (34).



New in 1951 was No. 32(HAY849), a Leyland PD2/12 'Titan' with Leyland 58-seat bodywork. (Stuart Johnson).



No. 3 (HJU524) was a 1952 Leyland PSU1/11 'Tiger' with Leyland's distinctive 41-seat centre-entrance coachwork. (Paul Redmond).

1954

35	GLX916	Daimler CWA6	11853	Duple	H30/26R
35	KNR240	Leyland PSU1/13	540486	Yeates	C41C

No. 35[GLX916] ex-London Transport (No. D30; new 1944).

Both these vehicles carried fleet number 35; No. 36 was never used by Gibson Brothers.

Withdrawn **1959** (35[GLX916]), **1964** (35[KNR240]).

1956

37	NJU613	Bedford SBO	47860	Yeates	C37F
-----------	---------------	--------------------	--------------	---------------	-------------

Withdrawn **1962** (37).

1957

38	ONE6	Bedford SBO	51672	Yeates	C37F
39	EWM546	Daimler CWA6D	12655	Duple	H30/26R
40	EWM549	Daimler CWA6	12665	Duple	H30/26R

Nos. 39-40 ex-Southport Corporation (Nos. 77, 80 respectively; new 1946).

Withdrawn **1960** (39), **1963** (38, 40).



One of two vehicles numbered 35 was KNR240, a Leyland PSU1/13 with Yeates 'Riviera' 41-seat coachwork. (John Boylett courtesy John Kay).

1959

41	SNR582	Bedford SB1	70041	Yeates	C37F
42	HKL853	Bristol K6A	W3104	Weymann	H30/26R
43	GKP261	Daimler CWA6	11544	Weymann	H30/26R

Nos. 42-43 ex-Maidstone & District (Nos. DH170, DH35 respectively; new 1946, 1944 respectively).

Withdrawn **1963** (42-43), **1965** (41).

1960

44	MWL976	AEC Regent	06617916	Weymann	H30/26R
45	UNR146	Bedford SB1	77497	Yeates	C37F
46	VUT447	Bedford SB1	84465	Yeates	C41F
47	MWL967	AEC Regent	06617907	Weymann	H30/26R

Nos. 44, 47 ex-City of Oxford MS (Nos. H876, H867 respectively; new 1948); fitted with platform doors in 1960.

Withdrawn **1964** (44), **1965** (45-47).

1961

48	XAY187	Bedford SB1	86830	Yeates	C41F
-----------	---------------	--------------------	--------------	---------------	-------------

Withdrawn **1966** (48).

1962

49	102AAY	Bedford SB5	89285	Yeates	C37F
50	870AAY	Bedford SB5	89370	Yeates	C37F
51	KOD581	AEC Regent III	9612E2491	Weymann	H30/26R
52	HLX145	AEC Regent III	0961422	Weymann	H30/26R

No. 51 ex-Devon General (No. DR581; new 1950); fitted with platform doors in 7/62.

No. 52 ex-London Transport (No. RT328; new 1948); fitted with platform doors in 8/62.

Withdrawn **1963** (49), **1967** (51), **1968** (50, 52).



No. 52 (HLX145) was an ex-London Transport RT with Weymann 56-seat bodywork new in 1948 and acquired by Gibson Brothers in 1962. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).

1963

53	178CNR	Bedford SB5	91595	Yeates	C41F
54	KOD592	AEC Regent III	9612E2502	Weymann	H30/26RD
55	179CNR	Bedford VAL14	1126	Yeates	C52F
56	KLB842	AEC Regent III	09613326	Weymann	H30/26R
57	KLB510	AEC Regent III	09613163	Park Royal	H30/26R
58	407EAY	Bedford VAL14	1195	Yeates	C52F

No. 54 ex-Browns Blue Coaches, Markfield (new 1950 to Devon General; No. DR592).

Nos. 56-57 ex-London Transport (Nos. RT2463, RT1261 respectively; new 1950, 1949 respectively); fitted with platform doors in 8/63, 9/63 respectively.

Withdrawn **1967** (56-57), **1968** (54), **1969** (53, 55), **1970** (58).

1964

59	AJU957B	Bedford SB5	94164	Duple	C41F
60	KXW110	AEC Regent III	09613489	Weymann	H30/26R

No. 60 ex-London Transport (No. RT2481; new 1950); fitted with platform doors in 10/64.

Withdrawn **1968** (60), **1970** (59).



Two six-wheel Bedford VAL14 chassis were added to the fleet in 1963. This is No. 58 (407EAY) with Yeates 52-seat bodywork. (Geoff Stainthorpe).



No. 60 (KXW110) was the last double-deck bus acquired by Gibson Brothers. It was an ex-London Transport RT with Weymann 56-seat bodywork, new in 1950. (Len Wright).

1965

61-62	DJU705-06C	Bedford VAL14	1585/756	Duple	C52F
--------------	-------------------	----------------------	-----------------	--------------	-------------

Withdrawn **1970** (61), **1972** (62).

1966

63	GJU955D	Bedford VAL14	6817910	Duple	C52F
64	GJU954D	Bedford VAL14	6806890	Duple	C52F

Withdrawn **1972** (63-64).

1967

65	JUT945E	Bedford VAM14	6865334	Duple	DP45F
66	JUT946E	Bedford VAM14	7822644	Duple	DP45F

Withdrawn **1971** (65-66).



No. 65 (JUT945E) was a Bedford VAM14 with Duple 45-seat dual-purpose bodywork, new in 1967. (Stuart Johnson).

1968

67-68	NUT6-7F	Bedford VAM70	7T450899/962	Duple	DP45F
--------------	----------------	----------------------	---------------------	--------------	--------------

Withdrawn **1972** (67), **1973** (68).

1969

69	PUT617G	Bedford VAM70	9T464359	Willowbrook	DP45F
70-71	RNR8-9G	Bedford VAM70	9T466125/498	Willowbrook	DP45F

Withdrawn **1974** (71), **1975** (70).

1970

72-73	UNR10-11H	Bedford VAM70	0T477615/19	Willowbrook	DP45F
74	UNR12J	Bedford VAM70	0T477621	Willowbrook	DP45F

Withdrawn **1976** (72-74).

1971

75	YAY14J	Bedford YRQ	1T486165	Willowbrook DP45F
76	YAY13J	Bedford YRQ	1T483637	Willowbrook DP45F

Withdrawn 1976 (76), 1977 (75).

1972

77	CNR15K	Bedford YRQ	1T490218	Willowbrook C45F
78	CNR16K	Bedford YRQ	2T472199	Willowbrook C45F
79-80	GNR17-18L	Bedford YRT	CW451361/70	Willowbrook C51F

Withdrawn 1978 (77-79), 1979 (80).

1974

81-82	PNR319-20M	Bedford YRT	DW450148/663	Plaxton	C53F
-------	------------	-------------	--------------	---------	------

Nos. 81-82 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.



No. 76 (YAY13J), a 1971 Bedford YRQ with Willowbrook 45-seat dual-purpose bodywork. (John Law).



New in 1972 was No. 80 (GNR18L), a Bedford YRT with Willowbrook 51-seat bodywork. (John Law).

1975

83	GRY627N	Bedford YRT	EW450329	Plaxton	C53F
84	GRY626N	Bedford YRT	DW457099	Plaxton	C53F

Nos. 83-84 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.

1976

85-87	LNR85-87P	Bedford YMT	FW453512/17/77	Plaxton	C53F
88-89	OFP88-89R	Bedford YMT	FW455870/6538	Plaxton	C53F

Nos. 85-87 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.
Withdrawn **1981** (88-89).

1978

90	WRY90S	Bedford YMT	HW452382	Plaxton	C53F
-----------	---------------	--------------------	-----------------	----------------	-------------

Withdrawn **1981** (90).

In August 1979 Gibson Brothers Ltd was purchased by Leicester City Transport, who kept the business as a subsidiary until October 1982 when it was merged with the main fleet.

1979

5-6	FUT5-6V	Leyland PSU3E/4R	7902745/572	Plaxton	C53F
------------	----------------	-------------------------	--------------------	----------------	-------------

Nos. 5-6 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.

1980

3	KJF3V	Leyland PSU3E/4R	8030158	Plaxton	C53F
4	KBC4V	Leyland PSU3E/4R	8030148	Plaxton	C53F

Nos. 3-4 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.

1981

1-2	TBC1-2X	Leyland PSU3F/4R	8030445/08	Plaxton	C53F
------------	----------------	-------------------------	-------------------	----------------	-------------

Nos. 1-2 to Leicester City Transport 10/82 retaining fleet numbers.



One of the last two coaches to be added to the Gibson fleet was No. 1 (TBX1X), a Leyland PSU3F/4R 'Leopard' with Plaxton 53-seat coachwork. (LTHL collection).



The Bus Archive is a registered charity dedicated to the collection and preservation of records, photographs, publications and publicity for the road passenger transport industries - bus, coach, trolleybus and tram - and make these freely available to the public for research and education.

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit the Bus Archive website.

© Local Transport History Library 2025

Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
Our general email address is: lth.library@gmail.com

In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following publications: Commercial Motor, May 1956; Leicester Mercury, 1993; Gibson Brothers Buses, website (<https://gibsonbrothers.wixsite.com/gibsonbrothersbuses>); PSV Circle Fleet History PE11, 1988.

Photographs from the LTHL collection and courtesy The Bus Archive, John Boylett (courtesy John Kaye), Geoff Stainthorpe, Stuart Johnson, Paul Redmond, John Law.

Series Editor: Peter Gould (secretary.lthl@gmail.com)