

Bradford 844 **(FWX 914)**



Chassis:	Sunbeam F4
Chassis No:	50564
Motor:	British Thomson Houston type 209AY3, 95hp
Bodywork:	East Lancs.(1962) H37/29F
Body No:	5891
Length:	28 ft 6 in
Width:	8 ft 0 in
Unladen Weight:	7 t 19 cwt 3 qr
Entered Service:	August or September 1948
Withdrawn:	26 March 1972
Owner:	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

BRIEF HISTORY

844 was new to the Mexborough & Swinton company in 1948 as its number 30. Originally it carried a centre-entrance Brush single-deck body. After the M&S system closed in 1961 it was sold with 11 similar vehicles to Bradford Corporation. Of these, five were broken up for spares whilst the other seven were rebodied by Bradford, becoming the last batch of trolleybuses to enter service in the city.

The intention had been to extend the chassis to allow new 70-seat forward entrance bodywork to be fitted but with a new manager that year Bradford's policy towards trolleybuses changed. Consequently, the chassis although rebuilt were not lengthened, nor were they fitted with automatic acceleration control as was standard in the Bradford fleet.

844 re-entered service with its new East Lancs double-deck body on 1 January 1963. In 1972 it was chosen to be the official last trolleybus in Great Britain. Repainted and decorated with bunting, 844 carried the legend "1911 Bradford's Last Trolleybus 1972" on the offside advert panels, whilst that on the nearside was similar but "Bradford's" was replaced by "Britain's". At 3.00 pm on Sunday 26th March 1972, 844 performed the last journey carrying the official party. On its arrival at Thornbury Depot, after speeches the power was turned off on Britain's last trolleybus system.

844 was retained by the Transport Department, but ownership transferred to West Yorkshire PTA in 1974 when BCT was absorbed by that body. West Yorkshire Combined Authority has replaced the PTA and still owns 844 which is normally housed at Keighley Bus Museum. We are grateful to WYCA and KBM for the loan of this historic vehicle to The Trolleybus Museum for the 50th anniversary of that last journey.