

Wellington (NZ) 82 (EV 6757)



Chassis:	BUT (Leyland) RETBI
Chassis No:	SO9926
Motor:	
Bodywork:	MCCW B42D
Length:	33ft
Width:	8ft 2 ¹ / ₂ in
Body Number:	
Unladen Weight:	
Entered Service:	13 March 1964
Withdrawn:	1986

BRIEF HISTORY

Trolleybuses in Wellington were part of the city's public transport system from 1924 until 1932 and again from 1949 until 2017. It was the last trolleybus system operating commercially in Oceania and the last major system in a country where driving is on the left side of the road.

Although at first glance 82 is an overseas trolleybus and has several features unfamiliar to British eyes, such as the side compartments for carrying prams and pushchairs, it was in fact built entirely by British manufacturers in the UK.

In 1946 two rival manufacturers, AEC and Leyland Motors, had created what is nowadays known as a joint venture to take over their "fixed route" transport interests. Primarily this was the building of trolleybuses but also included diesel railcars for British Railways and others. Trolleybus chassis for the home market were usually based on AEC designs whilst export chassis followed Leyland practice and were built at Leyland's factories in the London area and Lancashire. The 38 chassis for Wellington were constructed at the Scammell works in Watford.

The Leyland-designed RETBI chassis intended for single-deck use was premiered at the 1950 Commercial Motor Show in London. This prototype trolleybus entered the Glasgow Corporation fleet and was followed during the 1950's by 20 more; these were the last single deck trolleybuses built for the home market. 82 has a similar chassis to the Glasgow vehicles and its body was built by Metro-Cammell at their Birmingham works. 82 is especially

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interesting as on 25 November 1963 it was road-tested on the Walsall system - the only one of the batch to run on British roads under its own power.

82 was originally registered as p.476 but the entire Wellington fleet was re-registered in the EV series at some time prior to 1973.

After being withdrawn from service 82 was stored at the Foxton trolleybus museum in New Zealand until donated to the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft in 2012. After being transported half-way round the globe for the second time in its life it was sent to the Thamesdown Transport Company's works in Swindon for restoration. Unfortunately, part way through the work was terminated due to a change of business policy by the company, so 82 then travelled north and the work was completed by First South Yorkshire's Rotherham Depot.

82 is now a regular runner at the Museum and like many of our overseas vehicles is very popular with the public. In 2023 it was adapted to carry wheelchairs, becoming the UK's first (and currently only) accessible trolleybus. It was essential that changes to the bus were kept to an absolute minimum and no structural alterations have been made; two double seats have been removed and a wheelchair backrest installed in their place. Using a separate lift, wheelchair users board through the centre doorway and are able to safely enjoy a trolleybus ride.