

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-SH6

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## SHELTON. John & GILBY. Paul Ramon t/a SHELTON COACHES London Road WOLLASTON

The founder of Shelton Coaches was John Shelton who was a native of Wollaston born on 13th November 1930. After leaving school John trained as a mechanic at Roper's Garage in Wellingborough. National Service followed in 1949 and on returning to civilian life John gained employment with British Road Services. In due course John Shelton became self employed and applied to the Traffic Commissioners for a P.S.V. Operator's Licence. At this point, in January 1953, John put down a deposit to purchase a Bedford WTL coach registered BKT 552 from J Woolston of Keysonian Coaches in Bedfordshire. The balance of the £175 purchase price was duly paid in February 1953 and thus the seventeen year old BKT 552 formed the basis of the Shelton Coaches fleet. It is understood that a Burton Latimer to Henry Gotch School, Kettering contract was obtained at about this time.



*In this photograph John Shelton can be seen standing alongside his newly acquired Duple bodied Bedford WTL registered BKT 552 little knowing how his fleet of buses and coaches would grow in the ensuing years.*

Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire is compiled by R M Warwick, "Forestyn" 101 Broadway East, Northampton NN3 2PP, who would be pleased to be advised of any additional information relating to the above operator. The records of the PSV Circle and the Omnibus Society have been consulted extensively for this series and acknowledgement and thanks are due to these organisations.

### SHELTON COACHES - WOLLASTON

Initially John Shelton found the going quite difficult and later in the year approached Paul Gilby to join him in the business. Paul Gilby came from Kettering having been born there on 6th November 1929. After leaving school Paul had been apprenticed as a motor engineer at Central Motors of Kettering. Likewise Paul was required to undertake National Service and it was during this period that he met John Shelton and the two of them became exceptionally good friends.

Thus John Shelton and Paul Gilby formed an equal partnership in Shelton Coaches and the additional capital created allowed a better coach to be bought in October 1953. At this point BKT 552 was traded in part exchange for a 1943 Bedford OWB that had been rebodied in late 1948 with new Duple V coachwork. This coach, registered CBD 213, was acquired from Messrs Yeates of Loughborough having previously been in the fleet of York Brothers of Northampton. It was numbered 2 in the Shelton fleet and was immediately repainted Tyrolean green and cream which became Shelton Coaches' standard livery. CBD 213 turned out to be a good purchase, staying with the firm until 1959 and helping to firmly establish the partnership.



*Duple V bodied Bedford OWB - CBD 213 - was photographed at Leicester shortly before it was retired in 1959.*  
(Photo courtesy D M Bailey).

A second coach was purchased in 1954 when EAJ 126 joined the Shelton fleet as its number 3. The chosen machine was a 1947 Leyland Tiger PS1/1 mounted with a Strachan thirty-three seat body and was again secured from dealers Yeates of Loughborough.

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*In this photograph EAJ 126, the Leyland Tiger with Strachan bodywork can be seen with Bedford OWB/Duple CBD 213. Paul Gilby sits on the mudguard of CBD whilst John Shelton and his wife Edna do likewise on EAJ.*

It is believed to have been early in 1956 that Shelton Coaches bought its first double-decker bus from Rushden's Wargate Motors (NN-WA9). This was a Leyland TD7c with Leyland fifty-two seat bodywork which was registered FOF 305 and numbered 4 in the Shelton fleet. It was purchased for use on the Burton Latimer to Kettering, Henry Gotch school contract in addition to the single-deck already providing this service. Other school contracts operated during the period covered by this paper included journeys from Grendon to Wollaston School, whilst works contracts were provided for construction workers to be conveyed from Finedon, Irthlingborough and Rushden to Twinwoods Wind Tunnels in Bedfordshire. This contract lasted for around two years.

In October 1956 Messrs Shelton and Gilby purchased two vehicles from Corby operator Patrick Gallagher (NN-GA2) who, it is believed, ceased trading at around this time. One of the two was a Daimler CWA6 Duple bodied double-decker registered CCX 734 whilst the other was a S.M.T. bodied Bedford OB registered BBV 896. It is not known to the Author whether or not Shelton Coaches undertook the contract work previously operated by Gallagher.

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*The all Leyland Titan TD7 registered FOF 305 can be seen here at the Wollaston depot with the garage and pumps to the left. FOF 305 was originally a Birmingham Corporation bus and Shelton's operated it for four years.*



*It is probably best not to ask what John Shelton and Paul Gilby were doing standing on the emergency door of FOF 305 when this excellent rear-view photograph was taken.*

SHELTON COACHES - WOLLASTON



*Shelton Coaches operated CCX 734, the Daimler CWA6 acquired from Patrick Gallagher, for a couple of years before disposing of it. The Daimler is seen here with its next user, the contractor Adkins & Shaw of Northampton.*

September 1956 saw the demise of the half-cab Leyland Tiger EAJ 126 when this was traded into dealers Yeates of Loughborough in part exchange for a full-fronted Foden PVRF6 coach with a centre entrance Whitson body seating thirty-nine passengers. By the mid-1950s exposed radiator coaches were looking a little dated and so KWU 25, the Foden mentioned above, gave Shelton Coaches a more modern looking vehicle.



*KWU 25 was Shelton's Whitson bodied Foden PVRF6 coach photographed in December 1957.*

*(Photo courtesy  
D M Bailey).*

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*Another view of Foden KWU 25 standing at Wollaston Depot and showing that it incorporated a rear-mounted Foden engine.*

The garage site in London Road, Wollaston was bought by John Shelton in 1953 and two years later a large Nissen hut was bought from Messrs James of Newport Pagnell who were at the time dismantling fairground property, and the building was erected on the Wollaston land. At that point Shelton's started to retail petrol and images of the garage may be glimpsed in the photographs on page 4 and below.



*In this photograph Foden FBU 235 can be seen standing between sister Foden KWU25 and Bedford CBD 213. Paul Gilby stands with KWU, Driver Don Jackson with FBU and another employee and John Shelton with CBD*

### SHELTON COACHES - WOLLASTON

Being pleased with their Foden KWU 25 Shelton Coaches acquired another one in 1957 but this time powered by a Gardner engine and carrying a Bellhouse-Hartwell body seating thirty-three passengers. This machine was new in 1948 and sported the registration FBU 235 and it effectively replaced the Bedford OB coach BBV 896 acquired from Patrick Gallagher in the previous year.

For reasons that are no longer clear Shelton Coaches bought a former United Counties Willowbrook bodied Leyland Lion in 1957 that had been used as a rest room at that Company's Biggleswade garage. Shelton Coaches did not use it as a public service vehicle but maybe acquired it for use as a short-term storage facility.

The final acquisition for 1957 was another double-deck vehicle for a school contract. The selected motor was a Leyland Titan TD5c with Leyland fifty-two seat bodywork. The machine in question was registered GNU 462.



*Fortunately a photograph of Leyland Titan TD5 GNU 462 which dated from 1939 can be seen in this illustration alongside an older TD4 model registered BAL 706 bought in 1960. (Photograph courtesy T Richardson).*

The partnership of John Shelton and Paul Gilby had developed over the past five years to the extent that in 1958 the purchase of a brand new coach could be considered. A Bedford SB1 was chosen fitted with a forty-one seat Duple Vega body. It was supplied by Silver Line Motors of Welwyn Garden City in June 1958 and hence was registered in Hertfordshire as 310 DJH. The number 310 was significant inasmuch that it was the firm's Wollaston telephone number and thereafter all new vehicles supplied to Shelton Coaches featured 310 in their registrations. After the acquisition of 310 DJH the firm really never looked back.

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*Shelton's first new coach was this Duple "butterfly" Vega bodied Bedford SB1 which no doubt enhanced the firm's ability to attract quality private hire bookings.*

*(Photo courtesy D M Bailey).*

Shelton's new Bedford coach replaced the Foden KWU 25 which passed to the Welwyn Garden City dealer in part exchange. Also disposed of in 1958 was the Daimler double-decker CCX 734 which transferred to a local contractor for staff transport.

During 1959 the elderly Bedford OWB registered CBD 213 together with the Foden FBU 235 were dispensed with in favour of a second brand new Bedford SB1/Duple Vega combination registered TBD 310 which was probably supplied by Errington's, the Evington based dealer.

By the summer of 1959 John Shelton and Paul Gilby decided that the time was ripe to create a limited liability company to carry on the businesses they were operating. Accordingly Sheltons of Wollaston (Garages) Ltd (636050) was incorporated on 31st August 1959 with a nominal capital of £2,000 divided into 2,000 Shares of £1 each. John and Paul each held 1,000 Shares. It should be noted that the operation of coaches was only one strand of Messrs Shelton and Gilby's enterprises. Lorries too were provided, many under contract to Scott Bader Ltd the well-known Wollaston chemical firm and most of these carried "310" registrations as did the coaches. Trucks were also supplied for M1 Motorway construction during the late 1950s. The Garage at Wollaston was another facet of the business and Shelton of Wollaston (Garages) Ltd described itself as Automotive Engineers, Diesel and Heavy Vehicle Specialists and also noted that any make of new vehicle could be supplied.



### SHELTON COACHES - WOLLASTON

In order to maintain a very modern fleet Shelton's decided in 1960 to trade in their two smart Duple bodied Bedford SB1s and replace them with two new ones with the then updated Vega forty-one seat bodies. Supplied by Errington's these two 1960 coaches collected the registrations VBD 310 and VNV 310.



*This illustration depicts Shelton Coaches VNV 310 which was a 1960 Duple Vega bodied Bedford SB1. No doubt the coach behind in this picture was VBD 310.*

Also in 1960 two more double-deckers were taken into the fleet for contract operations, one of which replaced the former Birmingham Corporation Leyland FOF 305. Incoming were BAL 706/7 which were former East Midland Motor Services 1935 Leyland Titan TD4s with newer 1949 Willowbrook bodies seating fifty-five passengers. A photograph of BAL 707 can be seen on page 7.

Moving on to 1961 a third new Bedford coach was added to the rolling stock in March when XRP 310 joined the fleet. This time the coach comprised a Bedford SB8 chassis with a Duple Super Vega body. The SB8 variant indicated that a Leyland 0.350 diesel engine was fitted instead of the Bedford 4.927L oil engine of the SB1s. In addition an extra double-decker was sourced for the contract fleet and this time an A.E.C. Regent with London Transport bodywork seating fifty-six passengers was the chosen vehicle. Its registration was FXT 259 but unfortunately an illustration of it has not become available.

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The pair of 1960 Bedford SB1s registered VBD 310 and VNV 310 were traded in to Errington's in part exchange for two new models in April 1962. This time Bedford SB5 chassis were specified and mounted with the familiar Duple Super Vega bodies. The more powerful Bedford 5.42L engine was fitted to the SB5 chassis. The registrations of the 1962 pair were 310 ARP and 310 BBD.



*Bedfords 310 ARP, XRP 310 and 310 BBD pose for the camera at Wollaston School in this illustration of Shelton Coaches' 1962 fleet of front-line vehicles.*

Finally, in time for the start of the September 1962 school term, a pair of ex-Western National 1948 Leyland Titan PD1As with Eastern Coach Works bodies joined the Shelton fleet. These were registered JUO 954 and JUO 956 and one of them replaced the older Leyland GNU 462. For many years Shelton Coaches transported children from the greater Wellingborough area to the Roman Catholic Schools in Northampton, work for which several double-deckers were required for the daily lift of these passengers.

Thus, starting with a single Bedford WTL in 1953 the Shelton fleet in 1962 comprised three very modern Bedford coaches and four or five elderly double-deckers for contract operations.

In November 1962 the owners of R L Orsborn & Son Ltd of Kettering (NN-OR1) reached agreement with Paul Gilby and John Shelton to amalgamate Shelton Coaches with those operated by Orsborn. To achieve this amalgamation a new off-the-shelf company was incorporated (730642) and duly renamed R L Orsborn & Son Ltd. The nominal capital of this company was £100 and Paul Gilby and John Shelton each held 50 Shares. Thereafter the company traded as Shelton-Orsborn and its history from this point will be continued in paper NN-SH6A.

*The Author is grateful to the late Paul Gilby and John Shelton's son Andrew for the supply of photographs from the Shelton-Orsborn archive used in this paper.*

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
1	BKT 552	Bedford	WTL	874186	Duple	C20	5400	6/35	2/53	10/53	J Woolston, Keysoe	Yeates, Loughborough	1
2	CBD 213	Bedford	OWB	14506	Duple V (12/48)	C29F	51881	6/43	10/53	c6/59	Yeates, Loughborough/ York Bros., Northampton	Errington, Evington/ Potter, Stanwick	
3	EAJ 126	Leyland	Tiger PS1/1	471968	Strachan	C33F		-/47	-/54	9/56	Yeates, Loughborough/	Yeates, Loughborough/ Cutler, Radcliffe	2
4	FOF 305	Leyland	Titan TD7c	303190	Leyland	H28/24R		10/39	c-/56	3/60	Wargate Motors, Rushden		
5?	CCX 734	Daimler	CWA6	11882	Duple	L27/28R	40631	-/45	10/56	-/58	Gallagher, Corby	Adkins & Shaw, Northampton	
6?	BBV 896	Bedford	OB	56849	SMT	C29F		10/47	10/56	-/57	Gallagher, Corby	Shaw, Maxey	
7	KWU 25	Foden	PVRF6	31206	Whitson	C39C		-/51	9/56	7/58	Yeates, Loughborough/ Beehive Ches, Doncaster	Dealer, Welwyn G C/ Hyde, Manchester	3
8	FBU 235	Foden	PVSC6	27746	Bellhouse Hartwell	C 33F		-/48	5/57	3/59	Yeates, Loughborough/	Hockey & Jackson, W'boro	
-	RP 8557	Leyland	Lion LT1	50903	Willowbrook	—	5044	3/30	-/57	-/57	United Counties (155)	J Mills, Higham Ferrers	4
9	GNU 462	Leyland	Titan TD5c	302746	Leyland	L26/26R		8/39	8/57	9/62	Hall, Deddington/ Shearing, Oldham		
	310 DJH	Bedford	SB1	63297	Duple Vega	C41F	1090/365	6/58	—	5/60	Supplied Silver Line Motors, Welwyn GC	Errington, Evington/ Moreton, Nuneaton	5
	TBD 310	Bedford	SB1	70886	Duple Vega	C41F	1105/459	6/59	—	10/60	—	Barwick, Ware	
	VBD 310	Bedford	SB1	76061	Duple Vega	C41F	1120/431	5/60	—	4/62	Supplied Errington, Evington	Alpha, Brighton	
	VNV 310	Bedford	SB1	76573	Duple Vega	C41F	1120/440	5/60	—	4/62	Supplied Errington, Evington	Errington, Evington/ Moreton, Nuneaton	
10	BAL 706	Leyland	Titan TD4	6433	Willowbrook (1949)	L27/28R	8542	3/35	5/60	3/65	East Midland D6		
11	BAL 707	Leyland	Titan TD4	6434	Willowbrook (1949)	L27/28R	8545	3/35	7/60	3/65	East Midland D7		
	XRP 310	Bedford	SB8	87359	Duple Sup. Vega	C41F	1133/341	3/61	—	10/65	—	Murphy, Bray	
	FXT 259	A.E.C.	Regent	06616832	LPTB	H30/26R	345	-/40	4/61	?	Harris, Cambridge		
	310 ARP	Bedford	SB5	89783	Duple Sup. Vega	C41F	1145/295	4/62	—	3/64	—	Smith, Long Itchington	

Notes: 1 - BKT 552 sold in part exchange for CBD 213

2 - EAJ 126 sold in part exchange for KWU 25

3 - KWU 25 sold in part exchange for 310 DJH

4 - RP 8557 previously used by Unuited Counties as a temporary restroom at Biggleswade garage. Not used as a PSV.

5 - 310 DJH sold in part exchange for VBD310.

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STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	310 BBD	Bedford	SB5	89790	Duple Sup. Vega	C41F	1145/296	4/62	—	4/65	—	Errington, Evington/ Wilfreda, Rawskill	
19	JUO 956	Leyland	Titan PD1A	472304	E.C.W.	L27/26R	2273	-/48	9/62	2/66	Western National 2929		
20	JUO 954	Leyland	Titan PD1A	472302	E.C.W.	L27/26R	2271	-/48	9/62	6/66	Western National 2927		

Notes: