

# **BLUE BELLE OF SOUTH LONDON**

## **A History of Blue Belle Coaches**

*Blue Belle*



**Richard Smith**

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# Early Days

Thomas Boon, the founder of Blue Belle, was born in Hove, Sussex in 1879, the son of a cabinet maker. He served a 5-year apprenticeship to a Brighton cabinet maker but then joined the Royal Horse Artillery as a gunner in 1899. After deserting one year later, he tried to join the Royal Marines under a different name and subsequently spent a short time in Cambridge County Gaol. He married Helena Slater in 1904, setting up as a house furnisher in the Brixton area of South London. He was granted two patents for bedsteads convertible to other furniture items in 1913 and 1917 (GB2501/1913 and GB104134).

Several companies were later set up by Boon:

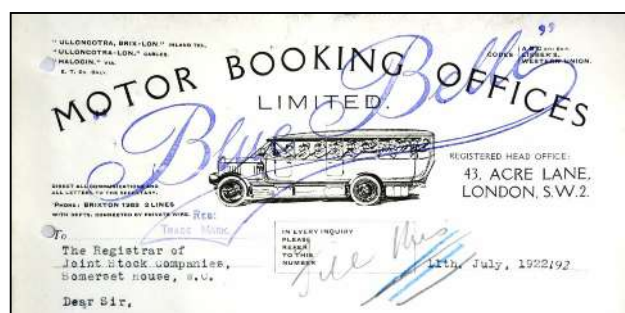
**Boon's Furnishing Warehouses Ltd.** (*Company No. 148440*) was incorporated on 13th September 1917 with authorised capital of £5000 to acquire and carry on (a) the business of furnishing warehouse and depositories and transport contractors, shippers, manufacturers, retailers and agents of house furniture and general hardware carried on by Thomas Boon at 43, 92, 94 and 96 Acre Lane, Brixton, and (b) the business of manufacturers, shippers, retailers, agents and dealers in motor cars and vehicles and machines carried on by Helena Boon at 43 Acre Lane, Brixton. The first directors and sole shareholders were Thomas and Helena Boon, later joined by Albert Cann, African merchant, Philip Livermore, furniture dealer, and Alfred Sutton, traveller.

In 1919 Thomas Boon was made bankrupt after he had "induced the petitioning creditor (*a cartage contractor*) by fraudulent misrepresentation to purchase a useless motor lorry from him for £220". Thomas Boon resigned as a director of the above company at this time. The company ceased trading in 1929 and was dissolved on 27th October 1931.

**Acre Depositories Ltd.** (*Company No. 172548*) of 43 Acre Lane, Brixton was incorporated on 12th January 1921 with authorised capital of £1000 to carry on the business of motor garage proprietors, motor, electrical and general engineers, transport contractors etc. The first directors and sole shareholders were Helena Boon, and Philip Livermore, auctioneer and furniture dealer. The Post Office Directory for 1922 listed Acre Depositories as charabanc proprietors. The company was wound up voluntarily in August 1922.

**Motor Booking Offices Ltd.** (*Company No. 176227*) of 43 Acre Lane, Brixton was incorporated on 11th August 1921 with authorised capital of £500 to carry on the business of booking office

proprietors, principals, agents and contractors for the sale of tickets for charabanc excursions, tours and private hire of motor cabs, cars, carriages, vans and other public or private conveyances etc. The first directors were Thomas Boon, and George John Laurance, engineer. Laurance resigned in 1922 and was replaced by Helena Boon. James Plater later joined the company as engineer and general manager. A fleet of six coaches known as Blue Belle Coaches were operated, two 28-seaters with Karrier chassis and four 24-seaters with Dearborn chassis. An entry for Blue Belle Coaches, Charabanc Proprietors of 43 Acre Lane was included in the London Phone Book from October 1921 until April 1925. Garages etc., were located at 442-4 and 479-80 The Arches, Rathgar Road, Loughborough Junction. The company later arranged the contract work for Blue Belle Transport (see below). The authorised capital was increased to £1500 in June 1923 but the company was wound up voluntarily in February 1925.



A Motor Booking Offices letter heading dating from July 1922 depicting a charabanc and overprinted with "Blue Belle" in the style used on early Blue Belle coaches and containing the words "Reg: Trade Mark". (*National Archives BT31/26727/176227*)

**Boon's Depositories Ltd.** (*Company No. 178776*) of 92, 94 and 96 Acre Lane, Brixton was incorporated on 2nd January 1922 with authorised capital of £1000 to carry on the business of shippers, agents etc. The company traded from the same address as Boon's Furnishing Warehouses and was listed in the Post Office Directory at this address until 1933. A special resolution regarding the sale of assets was made in October 1932 and in the following year a company called Furnsales occupied the premises. Boon's Depositories Ltd. was dissolved on 8th March 1935. Unsigned correspondence from the company appeared in the *Commercial Motor* of 23rd January 1923 in an article giving the views of a number of coach owners on taxation, licensing, fares and prospects for the coming season.

**Blue Belle Transport Ltd.** (Company No. 190304) of 43-45 Acre Lane, Brixton was incorporated on 30th May 1923 with authorised capital of £2000 to carry on the business of automobile engineers and traders, etc. The directors were Thomas Boon and Leonard Allan Mitchell. James Plater, formerly with Motor Booking offices, became the night service engineer. In 1923 the company made it known that they were the sole proprietors of the Blue Belle motor coaches. The company also provided haulage services using a fleet of 30 Peerless and Karrier lorries.

**Theatrical Transport Service** of 43-45 Acre lane, Brixton was advertised in *The Stage* in November-December 1923 and was probably a service provided by Blue Belle Transport.

The Theatrical Transport Service, whose head offices are at 43-45, Acre Lane, Brixton, have now available a large fleet of motor vehicles for road transport. Mr. Stanley Hutchins, the controller of the company, has recently revised the scenery cartage rate for the London area and is now able to give clients a thoroughly reliable service of transport with a minimum risk of delay, etc. Other depôts of this company are at Tottenham, Rotherhithe, Walthamstow, Streatham, and Loughborough Junction.

Details of the Theatrical Transport Service published in *The Stage* on 1st November 1923.

As well as running coaches and haulage services, Blue Belle Transport became a major supplier of new and second hand commercial vehicles evidenced by regular advertisements in *Commercial Motor* etc. They were agents for Spenborough tipping gears and bodies, and were also granted two patents for tipping gears in 1926. (GB249435 and GB253020).

A change of name to **Blue Belle Motors Ltd.** was registered in 1927 and the authorised capital increased to £6000 in February 1928, to £12,000 in September 1928, and to £30,000 in October 1929. The directors of the company were now Thomas Boon and Reginald Toms.

Reginald Toms was born in Leicester in 1892, the son of a shoe factory worker. He served in the Royal Air Force towards the end of the first world war after which he became involved in war surplus dealing and running "pirate" bus operations in the 1920s.

In 1928 a new garage was built for Blue Belle Motors behind the existing house at 57 Acre Lane,


**SCENERY LORRIES.**

THE  
**LARGEST FLEET**  
AND THE  
**BEST SERVICE**  
AT THE  
**LOWEST RATES.**

THE  
**THEATRICAL TRANSPORT SERVICE,**  
**43-45, ACRE LANE, BRIXTON, S.W.2.**

'Phone: BRIXTON 1363.  
Wires: "BLUBELAKA-BRIX, LONDON."

**BLUE BELLE TRANSPORT LTD**  
Offer the Last Batch of Genuine  
**UNISSUED W.-D. PEERLESS**



Selected from some 800 odd machines these PEERLESS TRUCKS were considered too good to rebuild—many have the original tyres and seals intact.

Fitted with  
**NEW CABS  
STANDARD  
W-D BODIES**  
FINISHED IN GREY.

**£210**  
CASH or  
70 down with balance monthly

— SIMILAR MACHINES CANNOT BE OBTAINED ELSEWHERE —  
Buy whilst you can. The price must rise.

**BLUE BELLE TRANSPORT LTD**  
**43-45, ACRE LANE, BRIXTON, S.W.2**

(0343) PHONE—  
3436/ BRIXTON.

CODE—  
A.B.C. 5th EDN.

TELE /BLUBELAKA,  
GRAMS—BRIX, LDN.

A Blue Belle Transport advertisement from September 1926. The location pictured may be Blue Belle Transport's base at 45 Acre Lane. (*Commercial Motor*)



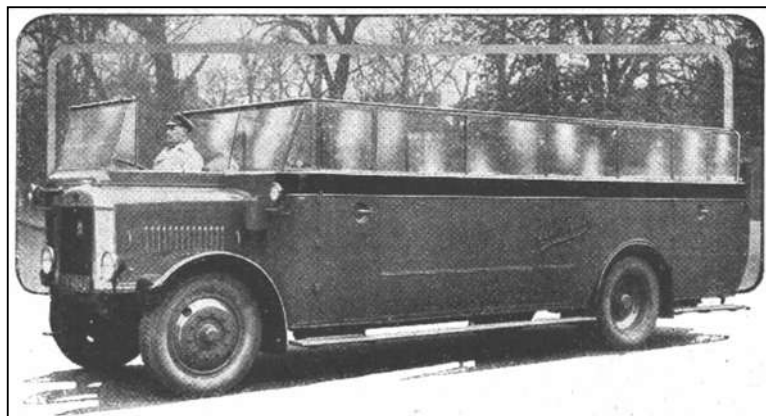
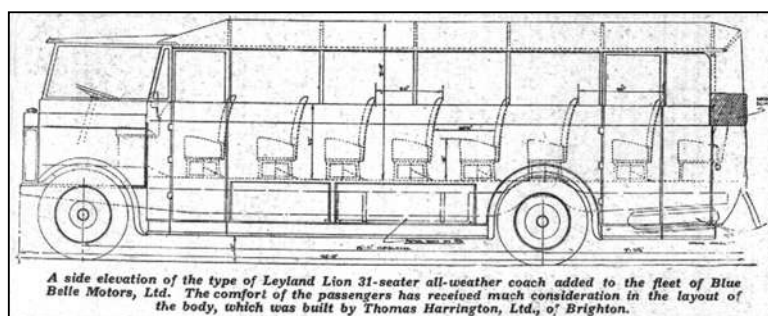
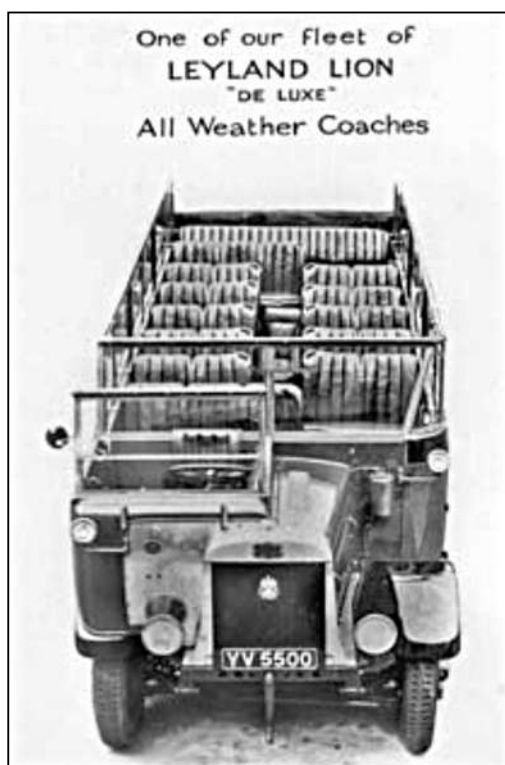
a short distance from its main premises. The building was large enough to accommodate 120 commercial vehicles and is still extant today. This soon became the base for the sale of commercial vehicles, the coach operation remaining at 43-45 Acre Lane. Advertisements continued for new and second hand commercial vehicles, buses and coaches, and in 1930 the company became agents for Commer Cars.

Seasonal coach services ran between London and several south coast towns including Brighton,

Worthing, Hastings, Eastbourne, Bognor, Ramsgate, Margate and Bournemouth, with works outings and race meeting services providing additional work. In 1928 the fleet comprised A.E.C. open-type coaches (both 28-seat and 32-seat), Thornycroft type A1 20-seat, and Chevrolet 14-seat buses, together with four Leyland Lion 31-seat all weather coaches with Harrington bodywork. Further deliveries in 1929 comprised Giflonds and Leyland Lions.



Interior view of the Blue Belle Garage at 57 Acre Lane, Brixton. (*Commercial Motor*)



Leyland Lions YV 5500 and YV 4043 with Harrington all-weather body delivered to Blue Belle Motors in 1928.

**THERE IS NO RISK**  
IN THIS **DENNIS** G TYPE 20 STR.  
**AND THERE ARE NO BETTER**  
**CREDIT TERMS**

Delivery from Stock. Specially light body, weighing only 15 cwt. complete. Trimmed in best quality real leather. Price includes painting and wiring to choice in best coach style, interior lighting and illuminated destination board. Your old vehicle accepted as first deposit.

CASH PRICE, £760	
Or one fifth deposit ..	£152 0 0
Balance outstanding ..	608 0 0
Interest at 5% per year ..	60 16 0
Total balance outstanding ..	£668 16 0
Payable in 24 monthly rentals of	£27 17 4

**BLUE BELLE MOTORS LTD.**  
49-55 ACRE LANE, BRIXTON, LONDON.  
Phone: BRISTOL 0023.  
For Second-hand Buses and Coaches on Hire.



A Blue Belle Motors advert which appeared in August 1928. (*Commercial Motor*)

**BLUE BELLE COACHES**  
*The Last Word in Luxury Travel*



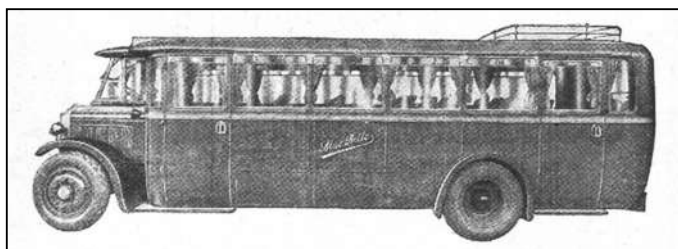
All seats numbered and reserved.  
FOR PRIVATE HIRE. LOWEST RATES IN LONDON.  
**DAILY EXCURSIONS.**

BRIGHTON. WORTHING. LITTLEHAMPTON. BOGNOR.	MARGATE. RAMSGATE. DOVER. FOLKESTONE. SOUTHEND.	PORTSMOUTH. SOUTHSEA. EASTBOURNE. HASTINGS.
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We will gladly send Programme and List of Booking Agents. Coaches Pick Up All Over London.  
Head Offices: 43-45-57, ACRE LANE, BRIXTON. Phone: 6022 (5 lines) Brixton.

An advertisement for Blue Belle Coaches that appeared in the *Motor Transport Long Distance Coach Timetable* for July 1929. The vehicle shown is one of the 1929 Gilford 1660T coaches.

Blue Belle 1929 Gilford 1680T with 31/33 seat London Lorries "Northumbria" body and "Plein Azur" sliding roof. This vehicle was exhibited on the Gilford stand at the November 1929 Commercial Motor Show at Olympia. A Gilford advert dated 5th November 1929 stated that Blue Belle had placed an order for two coaches the previous month. (*Commercial Motor*)



Ordnance Survey Map of the Acre Lane area of Brixton showing the premises occupied by Thomas Boon between 1912 and 1933. Apparently no map survey was carried out between the wars in this location but the area had not changed significantly by 1950 when this map was published..

77 Acre Lane - occupied by Thomas Boon, house furnisher 1912-17

5 Solon Road - occupied by Thomas Boon, house furnisher 1919

92, 94, 96 Acre Lane - premises used by Thomas Boon as furniture warehouses between 1914 and 1933 (94 from 1916, 92 from 1918)

43-45 Acre Lane - occupied by Thomas Boon from 1916 to 1932 (45 from 1923 when it became the base for Blue Belle Transport)

57 Acre Lane - the new garage built for Blue Belle Motors in 1928, vacated in 1933 when Blue Belle Motors transferred to 82 Clapham Road (London Terminal Coach Station).

Today the houses at 5 Solon Road and 77 Acre Lane are still extant, the garage at 57 Acre Lane is now occupied by a company specialising in sound systems and the premises at 43-45 Acre Lane and 92-96 Acre Lane have been demolished and replaced by newer buildings.

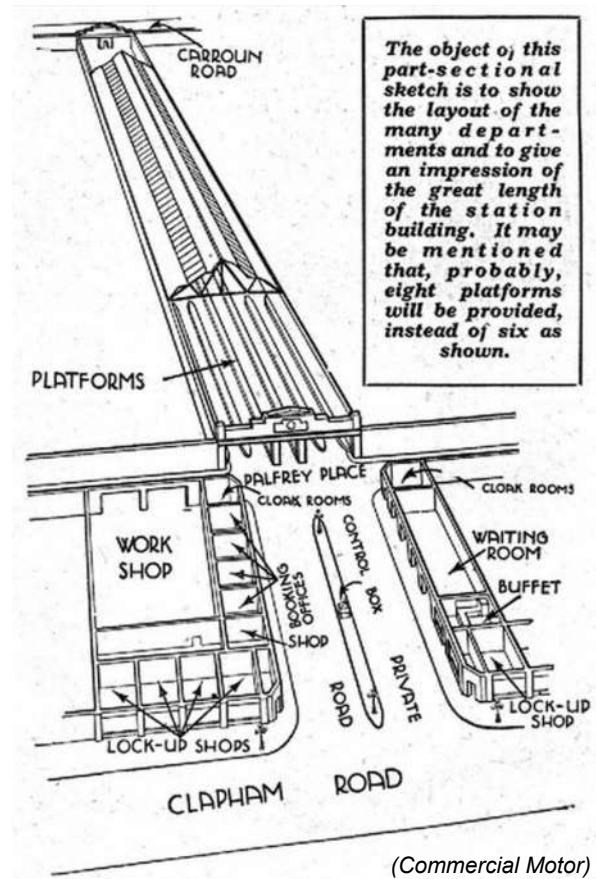
# Expansion and Decline

The flourishing coach business was in need of better facilities and a site was acquired by Boon and Toms off Clapham Road near the Oval. Initial plans were to provide a base for the Blue Belle coaches but the scheme was enlarged in order to generate income from the provision of facilities for other coach operators who were having difficulties with traffic congestion and restrictions in central London. The London Terminal Coach Station as it became known opened in the summer of 1929. The freehold was owned by Boon and Toms with a mortgage of £75000 from Associated Acceptances. Boon and Toms set up the private company **Coach Travels Ltd.** (Company Number 240937) to run the station. The company was incorporated on 10th July 1929 with authorised capital of £10,000 to carry on the business of motor hirers, garage proprietors, dealers in coaches and buses etc.



Coach Travels advert - February 1930. (Commercial Motor)

The coach station occupied a site formerly known as The Shrubbery, a private park adjoining the back gardens of two rows of houses running between Carroun Road and Palfrey Place. The station comprised an extremely long roofed building extending over 650 feet with loading platforms for 30 coaches and parking space for more than 250 coaches.



(Commercial Motor)



A view of the forecourt of the London Terminal Coach Station in 1931 with A.E.C. Regals in abundance. Identifiable from left to right are Blue Belle GJ 8069, GF 5131, GO 121, GF 5125, Orange Luxury Coaches GN 9736 and Blue Belle GF 5132. (British Commercial Vehicle Museum)





A view looking towards the rear of the London Terminal Coach Station. Blue Belle Commer Invader GJ 9745 and A.E.C. Regals GF 8349 and GF 5126 can be seen in the foreground. (*British Commercial Vehicle Museum*).

The existing buildings between Palfrey Place and Clapham Road were demolished in order to provide a spacious forecourt with further loading and unloading spaces for 30 coaches and flanked by booking offices, restaurant, buffet bar, shops, and a large repair workshop.

Possibly because the new coach station was not in an ideal location being away from the centre of London, Boon and Toms submitted plans to the London County Council in 1929 for a coach station and hotel on a site on the corner of Elizabeth Street and Buckingham Palace Road, Victoria. However the plans were dropped, and London Coastal Coaches later purchased the site and opened the present Victoria Coach Station in March 1932.

In December 1929 the *Commercial Motor* reported that Blue Belle Motors had ordered a fleet of 30 A.E.C. Regals with 31-seat London Lorries dual entrance bodywork for the 1930 season, painted in the standard Blue Belle colours of light and dark blue, and that the present fleet would be disposed of. The new vehicles were delivered between March and June 1930 and were given fleet numbers between 1 and 32 starting a new "1930 Series". 7 Commer Invaders also joined the fleet in 1930.

# REDUCED FARES

TO ALL  
COASTAL RESORTS

## BLUE BELLE

"The Last Word in Luxurious Coach Travel."

ENTIRELY NEW FLEET FOR 1930

### AUTUMN PROGRAMME

DESTINATION	DAILY including Sat. & Sun.		
	Single	Return	Day Ret.
BOURNEMOUTH	9/0	15/0	9/6
BOGNOR REGIS	5/6	10/0	6/6
BRIGHTON	4/6	8/6	5/0
BROADSTAIRS	5/6	10/0	6/6
CLACTON	5/6	10/0	6/6
EASTBOURNE	5/6	10/0	6/6
FOLKESTONE	5/6	10/0	6/6
HASTINGS	5/6	10/0	6/6
HERNE BAY	5/6	10/0	6/6
HYTHE	5/6	10/0	6/6
LITTLEHAMPTON	5/6	10/0	6/6
MARGATE	5/6	10/0	6/6
PORTSMOUTH	5/6	10/0	6/6
RAMSGATE	5/6	10/0	6/6
SANDGATE	5/6	10/0	6/6
SOUTHSEA	5/6	10/0	6/6
SOUTHEND	3/6	—	4/0
WEYMOUTH	14/6	22/6	—
WORTHING	5/6	9/6	6/0
YARMOUTH	11/0	16/0	—

NO INCREASE IN FARES ON SATURDAYS  
OR SUNDAYS.

#### SPECIAL MID-WEEK EXCURSIONS

	Day Return	Day Return	
Monday : HERNE BAY	5/6	Thursday : SOUTHSEA	5/6
BOGNOR	5/6	EASTBOURNE	5/6
Tuesday : CLACTON	5/6	Friday : BRIGHTON	4/6
HASTINGS	5/6	WORTHING	5/0
Wednesday : BOURNEMOUTH	8/6	A Limited Number of Coaches Operate on These Trips. EARLY BOOKING IS ADVISED	
MARGATE	5/6		

ALL SEATS NUMBERED AND RESERVED.

**BLUE BELLE MOTORS, 43-45, ACRE LANE, S.W.2.**  
Phone : Brixton 7102 (5 Lines)

A Blue Belle advertisement from August 1930.

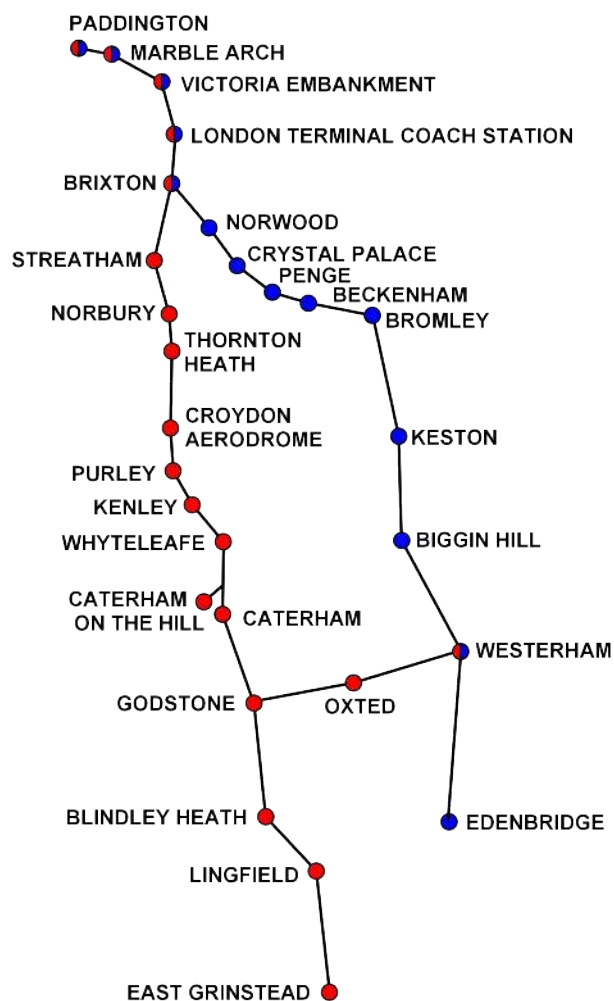


Blue Belle Motors' first limited stop express service got under way on 1st October 1930 running between Victoria Embankment and East Grinstead, Oxted and Westerham via Caterham and Godstone. A new service also started in December to Westerham and Edenbridge via Crystal Palace, Bromley and Biggin Hill. Both services were also extended at the London end to Marble Arch and Paddington. The East Surrey Traction Co. (later Green Line) heard of Blue Belle's plans and started a rival service along the same route between London and Godstone two days before the start of Blue Belle's operation. East Surrey services to East Grinstead, Oxted, Westerham and Edenbridge soon followed. As a result of the Road Traffic Act (1930) express carriage licences were required to operate services between London and outer suburban towns and Blue Belle was granted such a licence in December 1931 to operate a

half-hourly service between London and East Grinstead jointly with Green Line. In July 1932 the route together with six of Blue Belle's A.E.C. Regals were acquired by Green Line, after which Blue Belle concentrated on its coastal services and private hire.



1930 A.E.C. Regal GF 5130 on the Blue Belle East Grinstead service. (British Commercial Vehicle Museum)



Blue Belle limited stop routes 1930-32.



*"The Last Word in Luxurious Coach Travel"*

43-45 ACRE LANE, BRIXTON, S.W. Phone: BRIXTON 7102 (8 Lines)

**SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW.**

Express Service of fast Saloon Coaches operating between

**LONDON** (VICTORIA EMBANKMENT R.A.F. MEMORIAL) **AND**

**EAST GRINSTEAD**

via

New Chapel Cross, Blindley Heath, Godstone, Caterham, Whyteleaf, Kenley, Purley, Croydon Aerodrome, Thornton Heath, Norbury, Streatham, Brixton and Westminster

**COMMENCING WEDNESDAY, 1st OCTOBER, 1930**

DEPART FROM EAST GRINSTEAD at:—  
6.30 a.m., 7.55 a.m., 9.15 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 2.15 p.m., 6.55 p.m.

PART FROM VICTORIA EMBANKMENT (R.A.F. MEMORIAL) at:—  
7.0 a.m., 8.30 a.m., 12 noon, 4.0 p.m., 6.30 p.m., 11.30 p.m.

**FARES:**

Single	Return	Workmen's Return	Ordinary Season	Workmen's Season
1/6	2/6	1/6	15/-	9/-

(Per book of 12 Single Tickets) - per

Workmen's tickets are only available morning up to 8.30 a.m. and evening between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. (Saturdays 12 to 3 p.m.) Sundays excepted.

Intermediate Fares in operation to Blindley Heath Rd., Godstone Rd., Caterham Rd.

N.B.—These Coaches do not ply for hire in the Metropolitan Area, and cannot pick up passengers between the Caterham Boundary and Charing Cross unless they have booked previously or hold Season Tickets, which can be obtained from the Company's Head Office or any of their Authorized Agents.

Timetable leaflet issued at the start of the Blue Belle express service to East Grinstead in October 1930.



1930 A.E.C. Regal GF 5127 in Blue Belle livery and showing a destination of Pitlochry well outside its normal operating area. GF 5127 was acquired by A.W.McKercher (Aberfeldy Motor Company) and this photo was possibly taken soon after sale. (Omnibus Society)

Advertisement for Blue Belle's 1930 A.E.C. Regals that appeared in the *Commercial Motor* on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1930.

Special offer of 30 1930 A.E.C. "REGALS," six-cylinders, C.A.V. lighting and starting, semi-balloon tyres, servo f.w.b., fitted 31/2-seater Bodies by London Lorries incorporating "Plein-Azur" Sliding Roof, semi-bucket seats, facing forward, in real leather. Fixed dome and luggage rail, destination indicators, etc.

These vehicles were put into service new, in from March to June this year and original list price was £1,750. Price, according to delivery date and mileage, £1,275 to £1,350

The 30 A.E.C. Regals delivered early in 1930 were offered for sale in the *Commercial Motor* of 7th October 1930. 12 Commer Invaders that were new in June 1930 were also for sale in the same advertisement but it was not made clear if some of these were from the Blue Belle fleet. L. A. Mitchell, now Managing Director of Blue Belle Motors felt compelled to explain the sale of the nearly new Regal coaches thus:

"The Associated Equipment Co., Ltd., points out that the fact that these A.E.C. Regals are being offered for sale so soon after purchase tends to reflect, to some extent, on this type, which, as you know, is one of the company's current models. We hasten to assure your readers that these machines are being advertised for sale solely for the reason that, being desirous of offering our patrons only the very latest type of coach, we endeavour to operate an entirely new fleet each year, and that we are ordering a further fleet of A.E.C. Regals for next season's coaching requirements."

Indeed, a contract for the purchase of 20 A.E.C. Regal 662 chassis was signed by L.A. Mitchell on 30th October 1930 for delivery to London Lorries between then and February 1931.

The advert reappeared in the 11th November issue with 26 Regals for sale, but the policy of renewing the entire fleet every year did not continue. Only 10 of the 20 chassis ordered in October materialised and these were received from London Lorries in March 1931. According to the *Commercial Motor* of 1st March 1932 the Blue Belle fleet consisted of "65 modern motor coaches mostly of A.E.C. Regal type" which would appear to be rather optimistic.

In January 1931 the London Terminal Coach Station, which was owned by Boon and Toms, was conveyed to Blue Belle Motors for £100,000. The property was still subject to a £75,000 mortgage from Associated Acceptances, only the interest on which having been paid. On the same date a loan of £75,000 from A.E.C. to Blue Belle Motors was



1931 A.E.C. Regal with London Lorries C32R bodywork GO 120 after a mishap with the front suspension. (*Omnibus Society*)

used to pay off the mortgage and the charge on the property was transferred to A.E.C. with an agreement that until the loan was repaid Blue Belle Motors would purchase all future passenger chassis for its own use from A.E.C. After the transfer of ownership of the Coach Station, Blue Belle Motors granted a lease of the premises to Coach Travels Ltd on 1st April 1931 at a yearly rent of £5500. L.A. Mitchell, Managing Director of Blue Belle Motors, also joined the board of directors of Coach Travels Ltd, together with Frank Lyne, the Managing Director of the Central London (Road Transport) Station, near St Pancras, the latter with the object of co-operation and economy of working between the two coach stations. Such co-operation must have been short-lived since the Central London company went into liquidation at the end of 1933.

The **London Coach Owners Federation Ltd.** was incorporated on 31st August 1931 with its office at the London Terminal Coach Station. The directors were from the "Big Six" London coach operators, Birch Bros., George Ewer, United Service Transport, Keith & Boyle, Timpson and Blue Belle Motors, with L.A. Mitchell representing Blue Belle.

Another company operating from the premises of the LTCS was **B. B. (Sales) Ltd.** (*Company No. 268056*) incorporated in 1932. The company was an agent for Spenborough tipping gears as was Blue Belle Motors in the 1920s. Whether or not the company was associated with Blue Belle Motors has not been established. The company remained at the same address until it was taken over by Ronald Perham Ltd., refuse collection vehicle manufacturers, in 1966. The company was dissolved in 1983.

The year 1931 was probably the most successful in Blue Belle's history, but the opening of the new Victoria Coach Station in 1932 drew many of the operators away from the London Terminal Coach Station. This, coupled with the effects of the 1930 Road Traffic Act, the Amulree enquiry into London motor coach services, and the downturn in the economy seriously dented Blue Belle's fortunes. Blue Belle Motors had been advertising new and second hand commercial vehicles and coaches regularly in the *Commercial Motor* since the mid-1920s but this ceased after the 5th May 1931 issue. On 18th February 1932 the bodybuilders Scammell & Nephew Ltd acquired a controlling interest in the company. H R Hood Barrs, chairman and managing director of Scammells and two other directors R P England and J G Scott became directors of Blue Belle Motors. Hood Barrs procured over £25,000 finance from Scammells and guaranteed overdrafts on Blue Belle Motors' account with the Midland Bank. Boon and Mitchell retired from the board while Mitchell stayed on as general manager. However, Toms was treated by the new board as though he was no longer a director. Various claims and counter claims ensued between the new directors and Toms, one result being that on the 27th July 1932, Toms gained sole control of Blue Belle Motors. L A Mitchell was general manager for the company's coach services until 1934 after which he set up his own motor sales company **L.A. Mitchell (Motors) Ltd.** of 1 Balham High Road.

Thomas Boon left the motor industry soon after this for property development, building a house at 2 West Rd, Clapham Park which he occupied until



his death in 1950, and a number of developments in King's Avenue, Clapham. The premises occupied by his furniture business at 92,94 and 96 Acre Lane were in possession of a company called Furnsales in 1934, and Blue Belle Motors vacated their premises at 43-45 and 57 Acre Lane and moved to the garage portion of the London Terminal Coach Station. In 1934 43-45 Acre Lane was occupied by the motor firm Wallace, Carr & Co., and 57 Acre Lane by G.E.S Motors, later Prynne & Stevens.

A new private company **Blue Belle Coaching Services Ltd.** (*Company No. 268439*) was incorporated on 14th September 1932 with authorised capital of £100 to carry on the business of motor coach owners etc., based at the London Terminal Coach Station. The directors of the company, which remained dormant until Red & White acquisition in 1936, were Reginald Toms and S Barnes Bryant. Toms, holder of 99 of the 100 shares became chairman and managing director.

Toms, who also had sole control of Blue Belle Motors, approached A.E.C. towards the end of 1932 with a request to suspend payment of instalments due on the mortgage on the London Terminal Coach Station, on which £67,500 was still outstanding, and for a reduction in interest rates. Use of the Coach Station had declined and an agreement between Blue Belle Motors, Blue Belle Coaching Services and A.E.C. was signed on 10th April 1933 to the effect that:

- (a) instalments due on the outstanding mortgage would be waived for four years,
- (b) the interest would be 1% above bank rate with a minimum of 5 ½ %,
- (c) fees, dividends etc to directors would not exceed £3000 per annum,
- (d) management expenses would be limited,

(e) Blue Belle Motors would purchase 10 A.E.C. Regal chassis for £8207-10s as per contract of 17th November 1932,

(f) Toms to personally guarantee the payment of £8207-10s to A.E.C., And

(g) As long as Toms retains sole control of Blue Belle Motors he will also retain sole control of Blue Belle Coaching Services.

The 10 A.E.C. Regal chassis were to be provided with observation coach bodies by London Lorries but the company went into liquidation and the bodies were finished by Beadle and delivered to Blue Belle between April and June 1933. These coaches were not numbered in the "1930 Series" but



A poster from 1933 showing one of the A.E.C. Regal observation coaches.



Private hire was a speciality of Blue Belle. Three observation coaches are seen at an unknown location in the 1930s together with a rare capture on the right of the solitary Blue Belle Bedford. (*Glyn Bowen*)



Blue Belle Cruiser AGJ 928 was delivered to Blue Belle in April 1933 and is seen on a private hire outing to North Wales at Caernarvon. This coach was requisitioned by the War Department in 1940 and was later acquired by Julius & Lockwood of Lewisham. (Glyn Bowen)

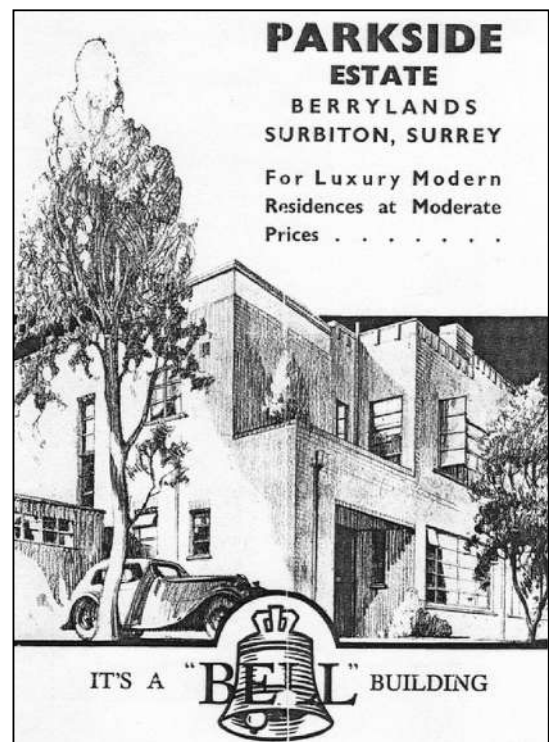
carried the branding "Blue Belle Cruiser". In May 1934 the fleet comprised 34 up-to-date coaches according to *Coaching Journal*, some of the earlier coaches having been sold. All the coaches including the observation coaches were renumbered into a new "1935 series" starting again at 1. These comprised 4 Commer Invaders, a Bedford WTB and 29 A.E.C. Regals.

The lease on the London Terminal Coach Station granted to Coach Travels Ltd. in 1931 was surrendered in April 1933 after the General Travel Agency (London) Ltd. took over the running of the Coach Station in February 1933. Coach Travels Ltd. subsequently went into liquidation. The General Travel Agency was set up by Gerald Nowell in 1929. Nowell was another of the "pirate" bus operators in London in the early 1920s and later established the Great Western Express coach service between London and South Wales. Great Western Express together with the General Travel Agency were acquired by the Red & White Services of Chepstow in June 1932 and the General Travel Agency was formed into the limited company **General Travel Agency (London) Ltd.** (Company No. 269817). Gerald Nowell also became a director of Red & White with responsibility for the company's London interests. Red & White had also recently acquired Samuelsons Saloon Coaches, MacShanes Motors and All British Travels and now used the London Terminal Coach Station as the London base for its long distance services and its expanding tours and private hire business.

Meanwhile Blue Belle started to cut back its coastal services. The direct Worthing service ended in 1932, Bournemouth and the separate Herne Bay and Whitstable services ended in 1934, Eastbourne

was combined with Hastings in 1935 and other services were reduced.

Reginald Toms had more profitable business interests to pursue at this time having recently set up the property company "Bell Property Trust" and an architectural practice "R Toms and Partners". More than 2000 up-market flats were built by the company in and around London between 1933 and 1939. The cover of the brochure for one of the developments in Surbiton shows an image of a bell similar to that used on Blue Belle leaflets of the period.



# Red & White Takeover

In 1936 the directors of the dormant Blue Belle Coaching Services Ltd., Reginald Toms and S Barnes Bryant were now joined by G.H.W. Pont, secretary of Bell Property Trust. On 17<sup>th</sup> November 1936 the authorised capital was increased to £3000 by the issue of 2900 ordinary shares, all of which were taken up by Toms. An offer to purchase the company together with 30 coaches (29 A.E.C. Regals and 1 Bedford) for £12,750 with £5000 directors compensation was accepted from Red & White. The purchase was completed in January 1937 and the board now consisted of the Red & White directors R Williams (Chairman), J H Watts, Guy Bown (Secretary), A J Watts, H M Davies, T J Jones and G Nowell (General Manager). The London Terminal Coach Station was put up for sale by auction in January 1937 but the reserve was not met. An offer to purchase for £57,500 from Red & White directors Bown and Nowell was later accepted. Blue Belle Motors Ltd. went into voluntary liquidation in June 1937 and this ended Reginald Toms' involvement with the motor industry. After the war Toms moved abroad with business interests in South Africa, Monaco and Ireland before finally settling in Switzerland at the "Chateau de Coinsins" where he established a world famous collection of tapestries.

The Red & White Blue Belle operation was based at the London Terminal Coach Station and under

Nowell's management efforts were made to attract other transport operators by providing facilities for goods services and garaging. Two companies with Red & White directors on the board moved in, All British Carriers Ltd, and Mechanization Ltd., and garage space was also taken by News Chronicle

By Order of Blue Belle Motors, Ltd.  
**LONDON TERMINAL COACH STATION,**  
 CLAPHAM ROAD, S.W.  
**HENRY BUTCHER & CO.**  
 will offer for SALE by AUCTION (unless previously sold), first as a whole, and if not sold then separately in two lots at The Mart, 155, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4, on Tuesday, January 26th, 1937, at 2.30 p.m., the unique and valuable  
**FREEHOLD PROPERTY**  
 known as THE LONDON TERMINAL COACH STATION, CLAPHAM ROAD, comprising spacious Parking Ground with 11 lock-up Shops and five lock-up Shops with flats over known as Nos. 68 and Nos. 80 to 86 (even), Clapham Road, also a Single Storey Factory of 5,000 sq. ft., the whole covering a  
**SITE AREA OF 32,500 SQ. FT.,**  
 also the large and lofty SINGLE STOREY GARAGE containing a FLOOR SPACE of 39,000 sq. ft. and covering a  
**SITE AREA OF NEARLY ONE ACRE.**  
 Vacant possession will be given on completion save as to certain portions now let. Present rentals aggregate £2,488 13s. 8d. per annum.  
 Particulars, Plan and Conditions of Sale of Messrs. Bircham and Co., Solicitors, Winchester House, Old Broad Street, London, E.C.2; or of Messrs. HENRY BUTCHER and Co., Industrial Property Auctioneers, 63-64, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.

Notice of auction sale of the London Terminal Coach Station which appeared in *The Times* on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1937.



Above: A view of the forecourt of the London Terminal Coach Station looking very quiet with a Red & White 1936 A.E.C. Q AAX 826 on the left and a pair of Blue Belle 1933 Regal observation coaches on the right. The photograph was probably taken soon after Red & White acquired the coach station. (*Omnibus Society*)



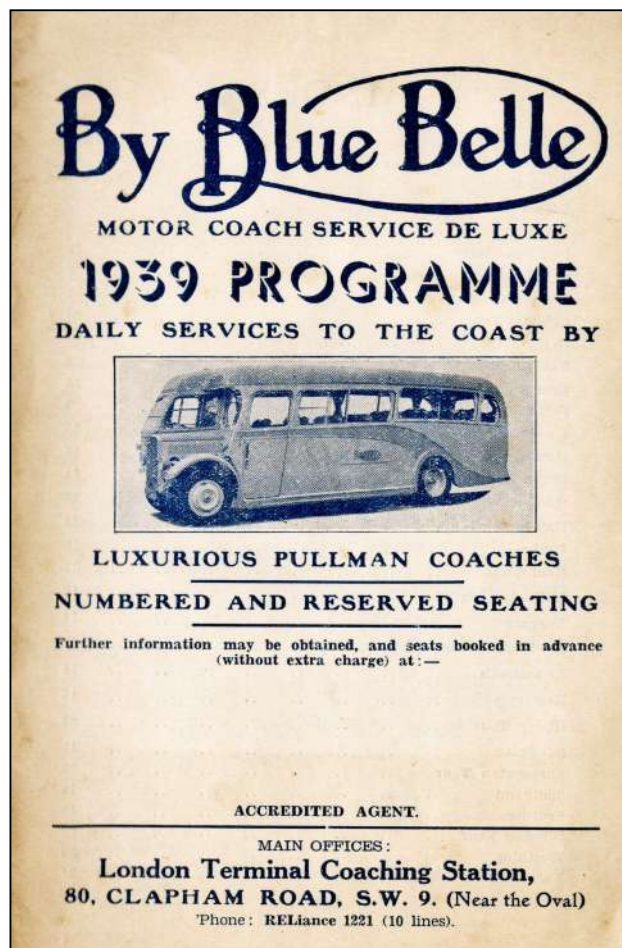
vehicles and private cars. Six Austin taxis were also purchased in November 1937 for use at the station.

In January 1938 it became apparent that Blue Belle had been operating some of its services without licenses which resulted in its Traffic Manager being sacked. From September Red & White transferred its London private hire and contract work including 12 coaches to Blue Belle all under Nowell's management. The coaches however kept their Red & White fleet numbers.

Three Albions with Duple observation coachwork and two with standard Duple coachwork were added to the Blue Belle coach fleet between 1937 and 1939 and a number of the earlier A.E.C. Regals with London Lorries coachwork were rebodied as coaches by Duple in 1938-9. The vehicles continued to operate under the Blue Belle fleet name with the Blue Belle fleet number prefixed with B.

In 1939 Blue Belle operated summer return services to the following coastal towns: Bognor regis, Brighton, Broadstairs, Clacton, Eastbourne, Folkestone, Hastings, Herne Bay, Hythe, Littlehampton, Margate, Portsmouth, Ramsgate, Sandgate, Southend, Southsea, Worthing and Yarmouth. The coaches for all destinations except Yarmouth left the LTCS at 9.15 am, the return journeys being timed to arrive back at 9.00 pm. A feeder service was provided to transfer passengers to and from 20 pick-up points in South and West London to connect with the departure and arrivals at the LTCS. Other services included afternoon and evening tours, private hire and race meeting specials to Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood and Brighton.

After the outbreak of war private hire carried on as normal for a time with the addition of NAAFI contracts but leisure travel was coming to an end. From February 1940 a number of London Transport buses were garaged at the London Terminal Coach Station. In the summer all coastal services except a once a week Brighton trip were suspended and the 12 Red & White coaches that had been transferred to Blue Belle in 1938 were returned to the main fleet. In July thirteen of the Blue Belle coaches were requisitioned for war duties. Gerald Nowell left the company for a commission in the R.A.O.C in October, and in November the coach station was damaged by bombing. Early in 1941 the Red & White London operations were closed down, the garage space in the coach station let to London Transport, the taxicabs sold and the 19 remaining Blue Belle coaches sent to South Wales where Red & White was short of vehicles. Shortly afterwards the Coach Station was again hit by bombing causing severe damage and demolishing the roof. Only the parts used by long distance coaches and All British Carriers were repaired. The Blue Belle coaches continued to operate for a time in South Wales with the Blue Belle name. They were later absorbed into

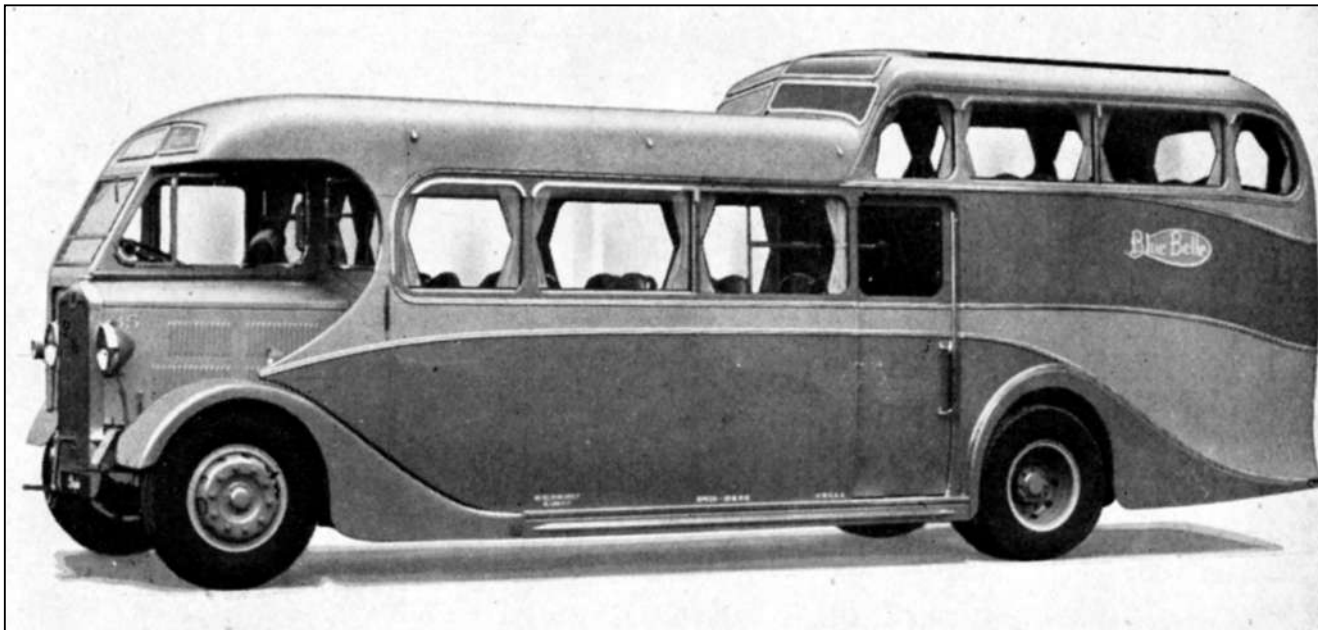


Cover of the Blue Belle 1939 programme leaflet.



A wartime view of 1931 A.E.C. Regal GO 119 in Agincourt Square, Monmouth, still in Blue Belle livery with fleet number B24 and with white painted mudguards and shielded headlights. (Omnibus Society / Roy Marshall)

the Red & White fleet and renumbered in the Red & White series by adding 700 to the Blue Belle number. Many were rebodied with utility bodywork by Duple or Burlingham later in the war.

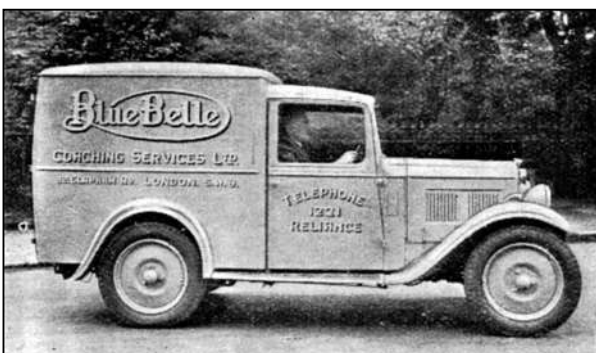


EJJ 476, an Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 with Duple 35-seat observation coachwork as exhibited on the Duple stand at the 1937 Commercial Motor Show. It was described thus:

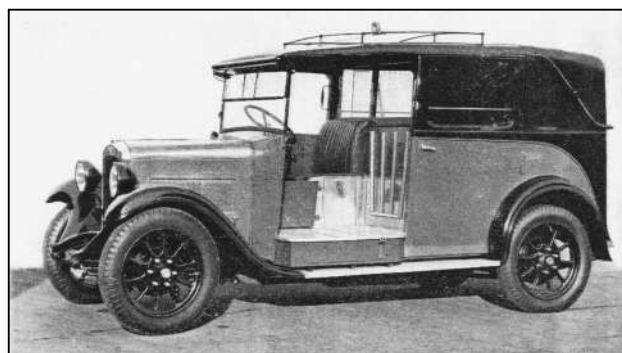
"The observation coach with a small staircase between the front and rear saloons, on the Duple stand, is a reminder that this type of vehicle is still favoured by some operators. This luxurious and well-appointed coach should do much to extend its use. In this instance, the body is a 35-seater mounted on an Albion Valkyrie chassis. There are 18 seats in the front saloon and 17 seats at the rear, with a sliding door to the central entrance and an emergency exit in front on the off side."



FLF 926 and FLF 927, Albion Valkyrie CX13s with Duple C32F coachwork purchased in 1939. FLF 926 received a Duple wartime B34F body in 1943 and was withdrawn in 1952 but FLF 927 retained its original coach body and was not withdrawn until 1958.



Austin 10 publicity van acquired by Blue Belle Coaching Services in 1937.



One of the six Austin taxicabs purchased for use at the LTCS.

# After the Second World War

In January 1946 an advertisement appeared in the Coaching Journal announcing the resumption of Blue Belle services. However the address of Blue Belle Coaching Services was now 143 Clapham Road, this being the head office of United Service Transport.

An official statement from United Service Transport followed in June 1946:

**United Service Transport Co. Ltd., has acquired the whole of the share capital of the following companies:**

Blue Belle Coaching Services, Ltd.

H. J. Phillips and Sons Ltd.

L Adnams Ltd.

The directors of these companies are now Mr. Stewart Cole, F.C.A., Chairman, and Mr. Walter F. French, M.Inst.T., F.I.M.T., managing director.

United Service Transport Co. Ltd., have also acquired a financial interest in Keith & Boyle (London) Ltd., and Mr. French is now a director of that company.

Mr. John Hylton Watts and Mr. Frank Boyle Monkman have joined the board of United Service Transport Co. Ltd.

Walter F. French was managing director of U.S.T., and Monkman was managing director of Keith & Boyle, owners of Orange Luxury Coaches. John Watts was managing director of Red & White United Transport, but also had a financial interest in Keith & Boyle.

Under U.S.T. ownership Blue Belle commenced post war operations with a motley collection of 15 old mostly rebodied A.E.C. Regals supplied by



FAX 347, U.S.T. Blue Belle 1017 was a 1931 A.E.C. Regal with a Harrington body originally registered to Timpson of London and was requisitioned by the War Department in 1940. It received a second hand Burlingham body and was re-registered by Red & White in 1946. (*Omnibus Society*)

## BLUE BELLE COACHES

HAVE PLEASURE IN ANNOUNCING THAT THEIR COASTAL SERVICES, EXCURSIONS AND TOURS WILL BE OPERATING AGAIN THIS YEAR.

**WATCH FOR  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

ENQUIRIES FOR PRIVATE HIRE CAN NOW BE DEALT WITH.

THEY WILL WELCOME A RE-NEWAL OF CONTACTS WITH ALL OLD FRIENDS & AGENTS.

'Phone: RELIANCE 3111

**BLUE BELLE COACHING SERVICES, LTD.  
143 CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON, S.W.9**

## Travel — BLUE BELLE

EXPRESS SERVICES TO

BOGNOR REGIS  
BRIGHTON  
BROADSTAIRS  
CLACTON  
FOLKESTONE

HASTINGS  
HYTHE  
LITTLEHAMPTON  
MARGATE  
PORTSMOUTH  
RAMSGATE

SANDGATE  
SOUTHEND  
SOUTHSEA  
WORTHING  
YARMOUTH

A selection of the following Tours will be operated throughout the season:—

EASTBOURNE — HERNE BAY — COBHAM — RIPLEY  
SHEPPERTON — WINDSOR — NEWLANDS CORNER  
ALSO TO PRINCIPAL RACE MEETINGS

Let us quote you for Private Hire — Service and Satisfaction at reasonable charges.

MAIN CHARTING OFFICE—Phone VICTORIA 9801/6

**BLUE BELLE COACHING SERVICES, LTD.  
143 CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON, S.W.9**

Advertisements for Blue Belle Coaches which appeared in the January and June 1946 issues of Coaching Journal.

Red & White. The coaches first appeared in blue livery but soon reverted to U.S.T. Green. The services mirrored those of the prewar Blue Belle company with express services to south coastal towns, tours, race meeting specials and private hire.



FS 255, U.S.T. Blue Belle 1012 was a 1931 ex-Scottish Motor Traction A.E.C. Regal with Cowieson body and was requisitioned by the War Department in 1941. It received a second hand Burlingham body before entry into service with Blue Belle. (*Omnibus Society*)



An aerial photograph of the Coach Station taken in 1945 which clearly shows the 1941 bomb damage to the rear of the station and in Richborne Terrace. Two properties in Fentiman Road also destroyed by bombing can be identified in the map below as "Ruin".



1950 Ordnance survey map with the original prewar extent of the London Terminal Coach Station building highlighted in red. Wartime bombing destroyed much of the rear. The remaining front part is shown as Terminal House and was occupied by motor dealers Keith & Boyle. The properties destroyed in Richborne Terrace have been replaced by prefabs.



Aerial view of the former London Terminal Coach Station in 1953 now occupied by motor dealers Keith & Boyle. The original buildings have been rebuilt and the prefabs which replaced the bombed houses in the adjacent Richborne Terrace can be seen. (<https://britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/eaw049838>)



The London Terminal Coach Station which was extensively damaged in the war was sold to Keith & Boyle (London) Ltd. for £70,000 and renamed Terminal House. The premises were rebuilt to cover the original area and reopened in 1953 as the base

for their Vauxhall and Bedford dealership. In the same year a new company Keith & Boyle (Orange Luxury Coaches) Ltd. was formed to separate their coach business which was sold to George Ewer & Co Ltd., the operator of Grey-Green Coaches. Keith

& Boyle (London) Ltd., passed to B.E.T. when its parent United Transport Group (formerly Red & White United Transport) was taken over. Keith & Boyle was later sold to the Heron Motor Group in 1983. The former LTCS premises were demolished and replaced with a housing development Usborne Mews. The forecourt however is now occupied by the Europcar car rental company.

In 1952 the Blue Belle fleet was modernised with the purchase of 3 new Bedford SB coaches with Duple Vega I bodies followed by 10 new Bedford SBO coaches with Duple Vega II bodies. The existing fleet acquired from Red & White in 1946 was quickly disposed of at this time.

In August 1965 the George Ewer Group (Grey-Green Coaches) acquired the goodwill of the passenger interests of United Service Transport and its subsidiaries Blue Belle, H J Phillips and L

Adnams. 39 coaches, including the 13 Bedford coaches in the Blue Belle fleet, were included in the sale. The Blue Belle vehicles were not operated by the new owner but were disposed of soon after acquisition. U.S.T. retained its road haulage business and fleet of around 500 vehicles until a bid to acquire the company by Daimler Hire Ltd, a subsidiary of Hertz Corporation, was accepted the following year. The dormant U.S.T. subsidiaries Blue Belle Coaching Services Ltd., H J Phillips and Sons Ltd., and L Adnams Ltd. were also included in the deal and all became dormant companies under their new owner. In 1977 the truck hire operation of Daimler Hire was transferred to the dormant U.S.T., which company was then sold to Godfrey Davis, and the dormant Blue Belle Coaching Services Ltd. was finally wound up in 1978.

U.S.T. (Blue Belle) 1952 Bedford SB MLL 248 (1024) on a Brighton service. (Omnibus Society)



U.S.T. (Blue Belle) 1954 Bedford SBO OXT 307 (1406) en route to Eastbourne. (Omnibus Society)





**80,000** 

**square feet of service ...**

 **Y**es, that's the floor area at Keith & Boyle. A direct drive-through an eighth of a mile long is lined with bays equipped to handle every operation, from greasing to shot-blasting, ON THE SPOT. The depot is staffed by mechanics factory-trained in the latest techniques, and a "bank" of reconditioned engines and replacement parts ensures that there is no delay on any job.

 **AND, OF COURSE, THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE TO CHOOSE YOUR NEW VEHICLES.**

*Experts in special-purpose bodywork*

**MAIN-CENTRE SERVICE IN THE HEART OF LONDON**

**KEITH & BOYLE**

VAUXHALL, BEDFORD, SCAMMELL MAIN DEALERS

TERMINAL HOUSE, 80 CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON, S.W.9

Close to OVAL Underground Station Telephone: RELiance 4211

A Keith & Boyle advertisement from 1954 showing the interior of the Terminal House premises.

**BLUE BELLE**

COACHING SERVICES LTD.  
279, BALHAM HIGH ROAD, LONDON, S.W.17.

**1959 SEASON**



SEAT BOOKING DEPT.  
289, MERTON RD., SOUTHFIELDS, S.W.18.  
PHONE: VANDYKE 7266 (10 lines)

**COASTAL SERVICES**

TOURS AND RACE MEETINGS  
SEATS NUMBERED AND RESERVED

LOCAL AGENT : 

Cover of the 1959 Blue Belle fare and timetable leaflet.



A view of Keith & Boyle's Terminal House taken in 1978. (Peter Marshall)  
<http://londonphotographs.co.uk/london/>



# Selected References

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Fleet History of Red & White Services Ltd., Part 1 (1926-1945), PG14; PSV Circle, 2018

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Vintage Bus Annual, ed. Ken Blacker; Marshall, Harries and Baldwin Ltd., 1979

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Commercial Motor Archive <http://archive.commercialmotor.com/>

British Motor Industry Heritage Trust <https://www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk/archive>

London Gazette <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>

Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>

British Newspaper Archive <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

# Fleet Lists

These fleet lists have been compiled from information contained in P.S.V. Circle publications.

## Blue Belle vehicles acquired before 1930.

This list may not be complete. Contemporary records state that in 1921/22 Motor Booking Offices operated a fleet of 6 coaches known as “Blue Belle Coaches” comprising two 28-seaters with Karrier chassis and four 24-seaters with Dearborn chassis <sup>1</sup>, and in 1928, as well as the Leyland Lions listed below, the fleet comprised A.E.C. open-type coaches (both 28-seaters and 32-seaters), Thornycroft type A1 20-seaters and Chevrolet 14-seaters <sup>2</sup>.

1. Motor Transport Year Book 1921/22
2. Commercial Motor 19<sup>th</sup> June 1928

Fleet No.	Reg'n	New	Chassis	Body	New Body	New / Previous Owner	Out	Disposal
	XB 9780	1916	Karrier WDS		Ch32 5/1920	New to War Dep't; acquired, rebodied and re-reg'd XB 9780 5/1920	c1922	Porlock & Minehead MS c1922
	MD 9163	1918	A.E.C. YC (11938)		Ch28 10/1021	New to War Dep't; acquired, rebodied and re-reg'd MD 9163 10/1921	6/1926	No further operator
	AR 9305	1917	Seabrook	Ch25		New? To W Newbury, Watford, acquired 1923	1926	C A Beighton, Maltby 1926
	AR 9306	1917	Karrier Y	Ch32		New? To W Newbury, Watford, acquired 1923	1927	Porlock & Minehead MS 1927
4	XF 8143	4/1921	Dearborn '48' (1067)	Ch20		New to Boon, Acre Depositories	5/1928	Gittins & Co., Mansfield Woodhouse 3/29
5	XD 8129	8/1920	Dearborn (WU31424)	Ch20; resealed to Ch24 3/1926		Boon, Acre Depositories	3/1926	A Harris, Walmer 8/28
7	LY 8175	1918	A.E.C. YC (12332)		Ch- 1919	New to War Dep't; rebodied and re-reg'd LY 8175 1919; acquired 1924?	?	?
8	XT 6840	1917/8	A.E.C. YC (9118)		Ch20 6/1924	New to War Dept; acquired, rebodied and re-reg'd XT6840 6/1924	?	Easson, Dundee at unknown date
9	HO 6485	6/1926	Thornycroft A1 Long (12383)	Hall Lewis Ch23		ex-Thornycroft demonstrator, possibly acquired 1926	-/1930	Chelsea Hotels; St Helier, Jersey 9/30
10	FR 1837	1920	A.E.C. YC	Ch-		possibly acquired 1924	?	?
11	YN 7234	3/1926	Chevrolet X (8020)	C14D		New	4/1929	Montgomery, Lenton 11/29
20	YV 4043	4/1928	Leyland Lion LSC3 (46543)	Harrington C31D		New	3/1929	F.J.Nunn, London SE15 3/29
21	YV 4121	4/1928	Leyland Lion LSC3 (46551)	Harrington C31D		New	4/1929	Renown Traction, London E6 1/35
22	YV 5500	5/1928	Leyland Lion LSC3 (46550)	Harrington C31D		New	3/1929	F.J.Nunn, London SE15 3/29
	GU 2076	3/1929	Gilford 166OT (10610)	Wycombe C32D		New	3/1930	H.T.Element, London E5 3/30
	GU 2082	3/1929	Gilford 166OT (10615)	Wycombe C32D		New	8/1931	G.F.Gorringe, Hampton Court 8/31
	GU 6722	4/1929	Leyland Lion LSC3 (47583)	London Lorries C32D		New	by 4/1933	G Demolie, London W11 by 4/33
	GU 7598	4/1929	Leyland Lion LSC3 (47584)	London Lorries C32D		New	4/1930	Garner's Coaches, London W5 4/30
	GU 7599	4/1929	Leyland Lion LSC3 (47935)	London Lorries C32D		New	4/1930	Garner's Coaches, London W5 4/30
	GU 7600	4/1929	Leyland Lion LSC3 (47936)	London Lorries C32D		New	4/1930	Valliant Coaches, London W5 4/30
	UU 1884	5/1929	Gilford 166OT (10714)	Wycombe C32D		New	-/1930	Renown Coaches, London E6 ?/?
	UU 1885	5/1929	Leyland Lion LSC3 (47542)	London Lorries C32D		New	by -/1933	A.D.Lampitt, Maidstone by 1933
	UU 5628	5/1929	Gilford CP6 (10878 or 10875)	Wycombe C20D		New	1/1930	W C Greenhill, Wolverley 1/30
	UU 7320	6/1929	Gilford CP6 (10890)	Wycombe C20D		New	7/1932	Wright's Bus Service, Louth 7/32
	UV 9116	7/1929	Gilford CP6 (11005)	Wycombe C20D		New	12/1930	C.Durnford & Sons, Newbury 12/30
	YN 3788	7/1926	A.E.C. AW (24129)	L.G.O.C. C24D		New to London General, acquired from Valliant Coaches 7/1929	8/1930	Wherry, Mevagsissey as C26- 8/30

## Blue Belle vehicles acquired between 1930 and 1939

In 1930 an entirely new fleet of vehicles was purchased and it was intended that all earlier vehicles would be disposed of. Consequently the new vehicles were given new "1930 Series" fleet numbers starting at 1. In the event however, the earlier vehicles were not immediately sold and some lingered on into the early 1930s. Soon after the formation of Blue Belle Coaching Services the fleet was renumbered into a "1933 series" again starting at 1. The 10 observation coaches delivered in 1933 were branded "Blue Belle Cruiser" taking fleet numbers 25-34 in 1935. This series reached 39 after the addition of the 5 Albions purchased by Red & White after takeover of Blue Belle. Red & White prefixed the Blue Belle number with B by 1939. Those remaining in 1942 were absorbed into the Red & White fleet and renumbered by adding 700 to the Blue Belle number. All vehicles were acquired new except the Bedford WTB.

1930 Series	1933 Series	Red & White No.	Reg'n	New	Chassis	Body	New Body	Disposal
1	14	B14, 714	GC 7407	2/30	A.E.C. Regal (662133)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937	Duple C32F 1/39	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 11/42; U.S.T. (Blue Belle) 1009 2/46
2	20	B20	GC 8568	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662164)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
3			GF 5136	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662088)	London Lorries C30D, later C31D	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 2/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T347 7/32
4			GF 5135	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662147)	London Lorries C30D, later C31R	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 2/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T346 7/32
5			GF 5124	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662189)	London Lorries C30D		J.Browning & Sons, Whitburn by 1934
6	12	B12	GF 5133	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662112)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
7	11		GF 5132	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662117)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		Scrapped 1937
8			GF 5131	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662190)	London Lorries C30D		R.M.Lee, Barnet 3/32
9	10	B10	GF 5130	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662121)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
10	8	B8, 708, C130	GF 5128	4/30	A.E.C. Regal (662166)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937	Duple C32F 12/38	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; W'drawn 5/52
11	6	B6	GF 5125	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662114)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
12	9	B9, 709, 109, S132	GF 5129	4/30	A.E.C. Regal (662115)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937	Duple B35C 1941	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 1941; W'drawn 6/52
13			Not Used					
14			GF 5127	4/30	A.E.C. Regal (662103)	London Lorries C30D		A.W.McKercher (Aberfeldy Motor Co.) at unknown date
15	7	B7, 707	GF 5126	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662119)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937	Duple C32F 1/39	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 12/42; U.S.T. (Blue Belle) 1016 2/46
16			GF 5134	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662104)	London Lorries C30D		Element Coaches, SE5 3/32
17			GF 8349	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662122)	London Lorries C30D		Tor Coaches, Street c. 1933
18	17	B17	GF 8348	3/30	A.E.C. Regal (662105)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/1940; R & W for spares 8/47
19			GJ 5366	5/30	A.E.C. Regal (662106)	London Lorries C30D		Garner's Coaches, W5 4/31
20			GJ 5365	5/30	A.E.C. Regal (662120)	London Lorries C30D		Garner's Coaches, W5 4/931
21	13	B13	GJ 5367	5/30	A.E.C. Regal (662148)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
22			GJ 8072	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662111)	London Lorries C30D, later C31R	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 3/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T350 7/32
23			GJ 8073	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662116)	London Lorries C30D, later C31R	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 1/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T351 7/32
24			GJ 8074	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662108)	London Lorries C30D		Element Coaches, SE5 3/32
25	15	B15, 715	GJ 8071	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662113)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937	Duple C32F 12/38	Hired to R & W, transf. later; U.S.T. (Blue Belle) 1009 2/46
26	16		GJ 8070	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662162)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		Scrapped 1937
27			GJ 8068	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662191)	London Lorries C30D, later C31R	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 3/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T348 7/32
28			GJ 8069	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662107)	London Lorries C30D, later C31R	Weymann B26F 10/35, B30F 3/39	Green Line / L.P.T.B. T349 7/32
29								

30			GJ 8390	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662110)	London Lorries C30D		Garner's Coaches W5 3/31
31	18	B18	GJ 8391	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662109)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1237		War Dep't 7/40
32	19	B19	GJ 8392	6/30	A.E.C. Regal (662118)	London Lorries C30D; C32R by 1937		War Dep't 7/40
33			GJ 8393	6/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28046)	Willowbrook C20D		Garner's Coaches W5 1/32
34			GJ 8075	6/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28055)	Willowbrook C20D		Tocia Motor Omnibus, Aberdaron 7/32
35	1		GJ 8076	6/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28132)	Willowbrook C20D		GJ Dawson SW9 (dealer) 1/38
36	2		GJ 8077	6/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28081)	Willowbrook C20D		JRM Coaches, SW11 9/38
37	3		GJ 8078	6/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28082)	Willowbrook C20D		GJ Dawson SW9 (dealer) 1/38
38			GJ 3641	5/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28048)	Willowbrook C20D		WJ Willis, Bodmin 5/32
39	4		GJ 9745	5/30	Commer Invader 6TK (28057)	Willowbrook C20D		GJ Dawson SW9 (dealer) 1/38
40	21	B21, 721, S331	GO 112	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662849)	London Lorries C32R	Duple B35C 1942	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; Hired to Reliance 8/37 - 3/38; W'drawn 10/51
41	22	B22	GO 113	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662851)	London Lorries C32R		Hired to Reliance 8/37 - 3/38; War Dep't 7/40
42	23	B23	GO 114	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662856)	London Lorries C32R		Hired to Reliance 8/37 - 3/38; War Dep't 7/40
43			GO 115	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662850)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 7/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
44			GO 116	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662852)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 6/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
45			GO 117	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662853)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 7/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
46			GO 118	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662854)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 7/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
47	24	B24, 724, S231	GO 119	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662855)	London Lorries C32R	Duple B35C 1942	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; Hired to Reliance 8/37 - 3/38; W'drawn 6/52
48			GO 120	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662847)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 7/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
49			GO 121	3/31	A.E.C. Regal (662848)	London Lorries C32R		Bath Tramways 6/32 (via Scammell & Nephew)
5	5		AXN 561	5/32	Bedford WTB (108486)	Orig. a van reg. GX 1760, acqu. 5/33	Duple C20F 5/1933 and re-reg'd AXN 561	W'drawn 2/39; Purnell, Rogerstone 7/39
25	B25, 725, S333		AGX 160	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621430)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Burlingham B34F 1944	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 1944; W'drawn 7/53
26	B26		AGX 161	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621432)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C		War Dep't 7/40
27	B27, 727		AGP 239	4/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621434)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Rebuilt Davies, Cardiff 3/43; Second hand 1938 Plaxton C32F at unknown date	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; U.S.T. (Blue Belle) No. 1019 2/46
28	B28, 728		AGX 455	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621431)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Burlingham B34F 1/1945	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 1/45; Transf. to Newbury & District 11/48
29	B29, 729, S433		AGY 513	6/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621425)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C; RC33C 9/43	Second hand ECOC or ECW DP35R 12/46	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; W'drawn 12/1952
30	B30, 730		AGP 841	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621427)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Burlingham B34F 1944	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 1944; Transf. to Newbury & District 11/48
31	B31, 731, S533		AGP 842	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621428)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Burlingham B34F 5-6/1944	Hired to R & W, transf. later; W'drawn by 9/53
32	B32		AGP 843	5/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621426)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C		War Dep't 7/40
33	B33		AGJ 928	4/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621429)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C		War Dep't 7/40
34	B34, 734		AGJ 929	4/33	A.E.C. Regal (6621433)	London Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Second hand 1936 ECOC DP35R 1947; resealed to DP32R by 2/48	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 12/41; Transf. to Newbury & District 10/48
35	B35, 735, C1037		EJJ 476	12/37	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44013F)	Duple RC35F		Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; W'drawn 10/51
36	B36, 736, C738, S3838		EXF 263	4/38	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44017C)	Duple RC35F	B.B.W. B35R 1950	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; W'drawn by 7/57
37	B37, 737, S3438		EXF 264	4/38	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44017B)	Duple RC35F	Duple C35F 1948	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; Bristol Tramways 5/50 - 1/51; W'drawn 1958
38	B38, 738, S1839		FLF 926	2/39	Albion Valkyrie CX13 (58010D)	Duple C32F	Duple B34C 1942	Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. 1942; W'drawn by 4/52
39	B39, 739, S1939		FLF 927	2/39	Albion Valkyrie CX13 (58010E)	Duple C32F		Hired to R & W 3/41, transf. later; Bristol Tramways 5/50 - 1/51; W'drawn 1958



## Red & White vehicles transferred to Blue Belle in 1938/9

These vehicles were transferred to Blue Belle with Red & White's London-based operations by May 1939. When Red & White closed down their London operations in 1940 the vehicles returned to the main Red & White fleet. They retained their Red & White fleet numbers when with Blue Belle.

Red & White Fleet No.	Registration	New	Chassis	Body	New Body	Notes
89	PJ 3827	3/1932	A.E.C. Regal (6621169)	Meltz C30R		ex-South Wales Express / Black & White Motorways 6/1933
90	PJ 3828	3/1932	A.E.C. Regal (6621252)	Meltz C30R		ex-South Wales Express / Black & White Motorways 6/1933
215	EV 1780	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (662102)	Meltz C32F	12/1938 Duple C32F	ex-Gorseinon & District 8/1938, but probably R&W 1933-6
217	VJ 3689	5/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621048)	W J Smith C32F	5/1939 Duple C32F	ex-Nell Gwynne Coaches 4/1933
296	TG 3381	5/1932	A.E.C. Regal (6621322)	Metcalfe C32R	5/1939 Duple C32F	ex-Gough's Welsh Motorways 5/1936
297	TG 3383	5/1932	A.E.C. Regal (6621321)	Metcalfe C32R	5/1939 Duple C24R	ex-Gough's Welsh Motorways 5/1936; rebodied by Duple 5/1939 as C24R with full height rear doors and boot for carrying bands; resealed to C32F later in 1939
177	WO 4267	6/1930	Albion Viking PKB26 (5091A)	Cowieson C26D	10/1935 N.C.M.E. C26-	New to Red & White; rebuilt to forward control by 10/1935, later resealed to C29-
256	AAX 284	9/1935	Albion Valkyrie SpPV71 (11602H)	N.C.M.E. C30R		New to Red & White
274	AAX 874	5/1936	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44003J)	Duple C32F		New to Red & White
307	AWO 620	7/1936	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44003K)	Duple C32F		New to Red & White
327	BAX 327	1/1937	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44007J)	Duple C32F		New to Red & White
329	BAX 329	1/1937	Albion Valkyrie SpPV141 (44007G)	Duple C32F		New to Red & White

## United Service Transport “Blue Belle” fleet 1946 -1965

The vehicles with fleet numbers 1007-1021 were included in the sale of the company to United Service Transport in 1946, some being ex-Red & White vehicles and others ex-S.M.T or ex-War Department vehicles refurbished by Red & White. All were withdrawn soon after the purchase of the Bedfords in 1952 and 1954. The latter were sold with the company to George Ewer & Co. (Grey-Green Coaches) in 1965, but not operated.

U.S.T. (Blue Belle) No.	Registration	New	Chassis	Body	New Body	Previous Operator	Out
1007	GJ 8071	6/1930	A.E.C. Regal (662113)	London Lorries C30D	C32R by 1937; Duple C32F 12/38	Blue Belle 25, 15; Red & White B15, 715	5/1955
1008	VJ 3689	5/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621048)	W J Smith C32F	Duple C32F 5/39	Nell Gwynne; Red & White 217; War Dep't 7/40	12/1954
1009	GC 7407	2/1930	A.E.C. Regal (662133)	London Lorries C30D	C32R by 1937; Duple C32F 1/39	Blue Belle 1, 14; Red & White B14, 714	4/1955
1010	FS 254	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621039)	Cowieson C28F	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1944/5	Scottish Motor Traction B9; War Dep't 6/41; S.M.T. 5/44	12/1953
1011	FAX 197	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (662688)	Hoyal C32R	Second hand C32F in 1945	Keith & Boyle GN 9737; War Dep't 7/40; re-reg'd FAX 197 1945	12/1953
1012	FS 255	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621040)	Cowieson C28F	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1944/5	Scottish Motor Traction B10; War Dep't 6/41; S.M.T. 12/43	12/1953
1013	EV 1780	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (662102)	Meltz C30-?	Duple C32F 12/38	W J Knight (Celerity), London E17; Gorseinon & District; Red & White 215	4/1955
1014	FAX 344?		A.E.C. Regal?				
1015	FAX 346	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621035)	Cowieson C28F	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1945	Scottish Motor Traction B5 FS 250; W.D. 7/40; re-reg'd FAX 346 1/1946	12/1953
1016	GF 5126	3/1930	A.E.C. Regal (662119)	London Lorries C30D	C32R by 1937; Duple C32F 1/39	Blue Belle 15, 7; Red & White B7, 707	5/1955
1017	FAX 347	3/1931	A.E.C. Regal (662502)	Harrington C26R	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1945	A Timpson, London SE6 293 GN 7293; War Dep't 1940; re-reg'd FAX 347 3/1946	12/1953
1018	FS 251	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621036)	Cowieson C28F	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1945	Scottish Motor Traction B6	12/1953
1019	AGP 239	4/1933	A.E.C. Regal (6621434)	L Lorries/Beadle RC35C	Rebuilt Davies, Cardiff 3/43; Second hand Plaxton C32F at unknown date	Blue Belle 27; Red & White B27, 727	12/1953
1020	FAX 345	6/1931	A.E.C. Regal (6621034)	Cowieson C28F	1934 Burlingham C32R in 1940	Scottish Motor Traction B4 FS 249; War Dep't 7/40; re-reg'd FAX 345 5/1946	12/1953
1021	FAX 348	3/1931	A.E.C. Regal (662559)	Harrington C26R	Possibly 1934 Burlingham C32R in 1940	A Timpson, London SE6 292 GN 7292; War Dep't 1940; re-reg'd FAX 348 5/1946	12/1953
1022	HYR 440	10/1947	Leyland PS1/1 (470204)	Strachan C33F		New	?
1023	DLX 917	4/1937	A.E.C. Regal (6622126)	Strachan C21F	C32F by 12/38	New to Pullman & European Motorways, SW1; Greenhithe & Dist. BS; transferred from L Adnams SW19 1037 4/1950	12/1953
1024	MLL 248	3/1952	Bedford SB (6887)	Duple Vega I C33F		New	10/1965
1025	MLL 249	3/1952	Bedford SB (6962)	Duple Vega I C33F		New	10/1965
1026	MLL 250	3/1952	Bedford SB (7064)	Duple Vega I C33F		New	10/1965
1400	OXT 301	6/1954	Bedford SBO (27398)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1401	OXT 302	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28351)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1401	OXT 303	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28107)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1403	OXT 304	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28317)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1404	OXT 305	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28278)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1405	OXT 306	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28142)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1406	OXT 307	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28369)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1407	OXT 308	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28469)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1408	OXT 309	6/1954	Bedford SBO (28396)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965
1409	OXT 310	6/1954	Bedford SBO (27883)	Duple Vega II C36F		New	10/1965