

Beach's coaches, Staines

Mr Harry Beach set up his coaching firm at 14, Gresham Road, Staines (next to the S.R. station goods yard) in 1934, initially operating Duple-bodied 20-seater Leyland cub coach, BMD382. A photograph of this vehicle when new is in the Staines Local History Society collection. He was joined by Albert Pursey from 1936, who then served as transport manager for over 40 years, retiring in 1977.

By the 1950s the fleet had increased to some 10-12 vehicles, mainly Bedfords, garaged and maintained at the small depot next to the family home. This incorporated a small office and booking desk at the front (to the left of the main doors). Vehicles generally left the garage by these doors (the day tours would load up on the forecourt), but normally re-entered at the back via a muddy alleyway from further along Gresham Road, where there was also a small parking area in which older, more interesting vehicles might be found stored. The main activities were local private hire and excursion work (e.g. to Wembley stadium), school contract transport, and day excursions to south coast resorts such as Brighton, Worthing and Bognor Regis during the summer months. The coach livery was mainly cream with red trim, and the vehicles were usually very smartly turned out.

Apart from making a nuisance of myself by frequently asking to look around the garage while I was waiting for my father to return home from work on summer evenings, I recall our school party being taken by one of the Bedford OB's (with the characteristic whining gearbox) from Kingston Road the mile or so down to Matthew Arnold school, where we were treated to country dancing classes once a week, also to football afternoons on Shortwood Common, around 1955-59.

Mr Beach retired in 1978 and the fleet was dispersed. The garage was used for a while by "Whytes Airport Services" but was unfortunately demolished, along with the adjoining houses, for re-development in 1997, so there is now no trace left of this long-established and well-liked local company.

A fleet list of all known vehicles owned by Beach 1934-1969 has been compiled from the records of the PSV circle at the Greater Manchester Transport Museum. A summary up to July 1957 was included in the Metropolitan Traffic Area section of their Newsletter no. 210 dated that month, and updates from subsequent newsletters are included.....

The following vehicles had been disposed of before July 1957.....

Reg No.	Chassis make & type	Body & seats	New	Acquired	Disposal
HX 9549	Lancia	??	1933	?	
BMD 382	Leyland Cub SKP2	Duple C20	1934	new	to Whippet, Hilton
CML 95	Leyland Tiger TS7	Duple C32R	1935	ex Venture, London	to Golden Miller Coaches
CMF 27	Dennis Lancet	??	1935	ex Ship Coaches, Staines	
BMX 331	Leyland Tiger TS7	Duple C32F	1935	new?	1945 to Silver Star, Porton
GMC 990	AEC Regal	Duple C32	1937	new?	
EUW 51	Bedford WT8	Duple C25	1938	new	to Alpha, Maidenhead
FLL 58	Bedford WT8	Duple C22	1938	ex Venture, London	to Alpha, Maidenhead
KMV 712	Bedford WT8	Duple C26F	1939	new	to Taylor, Sutton Scotney
MMY 164	Leyland Tiger TS	Wadham	1946	new?	to Alpha, Maidenhead
OML 742	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1947	new	to Blackburn, Godalming
OMY 455	Maudslay Marathon II	Duple C35F	1947	new	to Constable, Felixstowe
OMY 617	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1947	new	to Golden Miller Coaches
SMY 587	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1948	new	to Champion, West Byfleet
JXL 997	Maudslay Marathon III	Duple C33F	1949	Maudslay demonstrator	

The following vehicles were in the operational fleet at July 1957.....

TMV 306	Maudslay Marathon III	Duple C33F	1948	new	circa 1960
TMY 26	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1949	new	circa 1961
UHX 270	AEC Regal III	Duple C33F	1949	new	circa 1959
UHX 269	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1950	new	circa 1959
VME 102	AEC Regal III	Duple C31C	1950	new	1957
VME 103	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1950	new	July 1960 to Ewhurst Coaches
VMK 20	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1950	new	Nov 1961
VMK 568	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1951	new?	Sept 1964
XHX 426	Bedford SB	Duple C33F	1951	new	circa 1964
XMC 482	Bedford SB	Duple C33F	1951	new	circa 1964
XMF 752	Bedford SB	Duple C33F	1951	new	circa 1964
132 BMH	Bedford SBG	Duple C36F	1954	new	circa 1967
50 GMK	Bedford SBG	Duple C41F	1955	new	May 1965
164 JMY	Bedford SBG	Duple C41F	1956	new	April 1969

Added after 1957.....

VMK 568	Bedford OB	Duple C29F	1951	??	Sept 1964
94 RMG	Bedford SB3	Duple C41F	1958	new	Sept 1969
95 RMG	Bedford SB3	Duple C41F	1958	new	

OPP 863	AEC Regal IV	Duple C41F	1952	1959 ex Crook, Booker	January 1964
23 YME	Bedford SB1	Duple C41F	1960	new	April 1969
7084 MK*	Bedford SB1	Duple C41F	Nov 1960	new	scrapped Aug 1964
5332 MM	Bedford SB1	Duple C41F	June 1961	new	
2678 MX	Bedford SB5	Duple C41F	March 1962	new	
4550 MD	Bedford SB5	Duple C41F	1962	new	April 1969
AMT 456A	Bedford SB5	Duple C41F	April 1963	new	
EMP 782B	Bedford SB3	Duple C41F	Jan 1964	new	October 1970
FPL 788C	Bedford SB5	Duple C41F	May 1965	new	February 1972
LPJ 411D	Ford R192	Duple C45F	March 1966	new	
RPA 985E	Bedford VAM14	Duple C45F	June 1967	new	
TPK 333F	Bedford VAL70	Duple C52F	Feb 1968	new	May 1972
XPB 350G	Bedford VAL70	Duple C53F	March 1969	new	October 1971
CPA 229H	Bedford SB5	Duple C41F	May 1970	new	
VOT 404H	Bedford SB5	Plaxton C41F	1970	April 1972 ex Banstead Coaches	
YOR 115J	Ford R192	Duple C45F	April 1971	new	
BCG 976J	Ford R226	Duple C53F	July 1971	new	
DOU 540K	Ford R226	Duple C53F	January 1972	new	

* Vehicle was damaged beyond repair by a falling crane jib

As a general policy, it seems that most vehicles were purchased new and kept for around 10-12 years before being sold on. The fleet size was probably fairly constant in the period 1955 – 65, with replacements on a 1:1 basis, though the average seating capacity per vehicle steadily increased. As far as is known, no former Beach vehicles are preserved.

K.A. Jagers updated March 2013