

WOLSELEY BUSES 1906





LORDSWOOD RD

HARBORNE

CLOSE TO
EXHIBITION
BINGLEY HALL

SPEED 12 MILES PER HOUR.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH & EAST HAM



"WHITE HORSE"

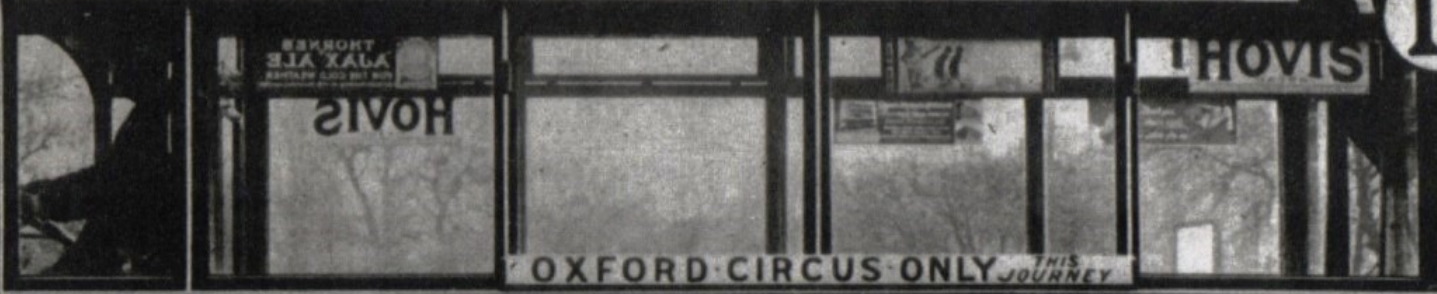


IS QUALITY.

By Appointment

BAYSWATER RD. - MARBLE ARCH - OXFORD ST. - BANK - POPLAR - PLAISTOW

15



GENERAL

JOHN CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL
SECRETARY
SPEED 12 M.P.H.



These show that Birmingham Corporation actually had Wolseley buses. although we knew that they were demonstrated to them and that they also had an early AEC that was not successful ; later they used Daimlers (built in Coventry). The first picture is almost certainly a demonstrator ,with an almost identical body to those supplied to the Silsden Motor Omnibus Company but with a larger engine, albeit retaining chain final drive. The second picture has a poster in the window referring to an Exhibition though with a destination board for Harborne which is near Birmingham; there is a picture of a similar (or the same) vehicle, this time fully laden with passengers, with a destination board for Hagley Road also in Birmingham. We know that Wolseley were building what were then full size single and double deck buses from 1905 and certainly as late as 1908 – the two biggest customers being the London General Omnibus Company and the Great Western Railway Company – although Manchester took a quantity of ‘deckers but soon handed them back (and they also joined the London stock), whilst GWR with both single and double decks converted all their double decks to single decks as their performance was severely limited with the engine range of between 20 and 35hp – barely more than some large cars of the period. The third picture is of one the London General Omnibus Company vehicles, who were reputed to have around 55 Wolseley buses between 1905 and 1910. We also know that during this period buses were in short supply and demand was high, leading to the import of chassis from America and mainland Europe (double deckers however were almost unique to the UK for many years).

In the U.K. it is a legal requirement for all public service vehicles to display details of the operating company and address – this is usually done on the nearside although it seems to appear on the offside on the Hagley Road bus but this is not clear enough to decipher! Note also that what appears to be the Harborne conductor could now be the driver of the Hagley Road bus (so I would assume them to be possibly Wolseley employees) and the passengers going to Hagley Road could be councillors and family members. Finally in the Harborne picture the character on the pavement bears a striking resemblance to Herbert Austin – in which case it must be 1905 rather than 1906!

PS Jun 2022