

# Going back to your roots (or do we mean 'routes'?)



A line-up of all ten models so far produced, in numerical order of route.

Many people will already know Malcom Keeley's fine new book which describes Birmingham's bus routes from one to 99 (and more). This was a source of inspiration when selecting the routes for the new models.

What was your favourite route? We are already receiving specific requests for this or that route. Forward Models is producing sheets of waterslide transfers so that collectors can change routes and destinations.

The current batch has routes 1, 9, 11, 15A and 32. The next batch will have routes 24, 41, 44 and 90. And a Walsall route number 15. It was difficult to decide on some routes. In the end, it came down to which routes matched registration numbers. There are plenty out there who will tell us that JOJ such and such never carried this or that route number!

## Very limited editions

Forward Models produces model buses for collectors. A common question is: 'Are the models real limited editions?' because there are no certificates.

Proprietor Derek Perry explains that every model is a special, limited run edition, and certificates are not needed. He said: 'I have seen cards provided by some manufacturers which state that the model is one of an edition of tens of thousands of models! This hardly makes them "limited".'

Derek added: 'All our models are in production runs of just a few hundred and they will not be repeated. They are, by definition, limited editions.' However, recognising that these models are important to the collectors who buy them, Forward Models will, on request, provide signed certificates confirming that any model is a 'very limited edition'.

## Taking a sober view

The advertisements on the sides of buses are an important feature of our models. They are carefully chosen to be correct for the period and the place. Forward Models is justifiably proud of their efforts at authenticity.

One of our supporters has pointed out the prevalence of advertisements for alcoholic drinks. To judge by all the whisky adverts, Birmingham must have had many people who enjoyed a wee dram!

However, the fact is that these adverts were very common in the 1950s and 60s. Also, some such as those for M&B beer are distinctive for the city and part of the scenery.

In the new batch there are no alcoholic drinks advertised on the sides of the buses. There is a preference for local adverts, such as 'Hercules Cycles' and distinctive

adverts of the time such as 'Drinkapinta milkaday'.

Depicting adverts from the 1970s brought another problem. Cigarette advertising was at its height, just before it was banned in most media. Forward Models wrestled with this problem but decided that just one might be allowed for historical reasons.

Before 1953, Birmingham's buses did not carry advertisements. They were probably considered vulgar by A C Baker, BCT's respected General Manager. But, when the trams disappeared, so did the substantial advertising revenue. It was not long before adverts were applied to buses to reduce the loss.

Forward Models' buses will generally be presented with adverts because of the additional colour and historical interest.



The famous 'Drinkapinta' advert on BCT 2935 on route 41.

## New models coming soon



This is a pre-production sample of NGW-10 in WMPTE colours which confused many Birmingham enthusiasts! On route 15, this is the original ex-Walsall route number from Bloxwich. And the yellow roof is correct as well. A small batch of BCT tin fronts were sent to Walsall to replace trolleybuses. When they were repainted in the ex-Walsall Corporation paint shop, they received yellow roofs rather than BCT khaki!

The new batch of five models, due in the spring, are based on tin-front originals but represent 27ft long vehicles. The original castings were for 26-footers but we hope collectors will forgive the missing 4mm. Making new moulds would simply be too expensive. This is the new set:  
♦NDB-06 BCT Daimler (MOF 225) on route 24 to Warstock with Elkes and Hercules Cycle adverts.  
♦NGB-07 BCT Guy Arab (JOJ

935) on route 41 to Turves Green with Drinkapinta and Dulux ads.  
♦NGB-08 BCT Guy Arab (LOG 301) on the 44 to Acocks Green - Co-op and Littlewoods adverts.  
♦NG W-09 WMPTE Guy Arab (JOJ 613) on route 90 to Pheasey Estate with Prudential and Gold Leaf adverts.  
♦NG W-10 WMPTE Guy Arab (MOF 58) on route 15 to Walsall (with yellow roof) with Vernons and Visionhire adverts.

## From Brummie to Wumptie

On 1st October 1969, the 65-year history of BCT came to an end. The largest and best maintained municipal bus system in Britain was amalgamated with those of nearby towns to become the West Midland Passenger Transport Executive (WMPTE).

With over 1300 buses already in blue and primrose, these would be the new fleet colours although the

blackberry would be toned down to what was called 'Oxford Blue'. There were variations and even old stocks of dark blue were used up. And some new WMPTE buses received an even lighter blue.

The new livery also meant simplification as BCT insignia were removed and some lining out abandoned. Two of our new models are in variations of the new livery.

## Repaints from Forward Models

Forward Models also produces repaints of other manufacturer's models but in liveries seen in Birmingham. The first are versions of the very first Brummie motor buses based on the Oxford Diecast B-type. These are hand finished with paper transfers for graphics.

The BCT model is a 1913 Daimler which ran along the Bristol Road to Rednal and Rubery to provide a tram feeder service. The Midland Red is an early Tilling Stevens which operated along the Hagley Road.

