

The LWL spent 15 years in the back of a bus shed, used as the night watchman's hut

The African Star Bus Company, new in 1967 and equipped with a Pneumo-cyclic semi-automatic gearbox.

It was from Sandstone that Bedwas & Machen UDC 7 (JWO 355), a Bruce-bodied AEC Regal halfcab single-decker, was repatriated to south Wales after the Cardiff Transport Preservation Group raised the funds in 2014 for its homecoming and eventual restoration (Preservation Update, October 2014).

Double-deckers in Joburg

The internet is a marvellous thing, especially when seeking information about one subject it will pull up something completely different and unexpected. While planning my visit to Sandstone, information about the James Hall Museum of Transport in Pioneers Park, La Rochelle, Johannesburg popped up and it looked too good to miss.

It was established by the late car enthusiast Jimmie Hall and the City of Johannesburg in February 1964. His son Peter continued the work until 2012 before retiring.

The museum is a veritable Aladdin's Cave and will keep a visitor occupied for at least half a day. It has several halls, with one dedicated to five trolleybuses (British-built Ransomes, Leyland, Daimler and BUT double-deckers from Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria), two motorbuses and five trams, which are displayed securely if somewhat cramped by lack of room.

The motorbuses on display are an Austin built as a mobile public library and one of 20 tri-axle Weymann-bodied Daimler CVG6/6 double-deckers built for Cape Town in 1949 with the larger radiator used in the UK on the short-lived CD650 chassis. These operated a 26km (16mile) route earmarked for trolleybus operation but never electrified; their Gardner 6LW engines proved inadequate for such heavy vehicles.

Motorbuses stored under cover outside include two double-deckers built for Johannesburg in the 1950s. One is an AEC Regent V with 69-seat Busaf body. The other is one of 10 tri-axle Guys supplied in 1958 with 12.17litre Rolls-Royce engines and a bespoke bonnet design that Guy used for a time afterwards on Arab IVs for the UK and which became known by the name of the South African city.

When built, these were reputed to be the biggest double-deckers in the world, at 34ft (10.4m) long and 8ft 6in (2.6m) wide. They had 85 seats and standing room for another 21 passengers. The museum says their chassis was a diesel version of that on 20 Sunbeam S7 trolleybuses that Guy produced around the same time for Johannesburg.

The City of Johannesburg owns the museum buildings, maintains the grounds and pays for the staff. Restoration of the vehicles to working order is funded by the Friends of the Museum who also pay for the road licences



The 1967 Leyland Tiger OPS4/5 and the Bristol LWL parked either side of the 2ft gauge railway at Sandstone. The steam locomotive Sezela No.3 was built by the Avondale Engine Company in Bristol in 1929 for the South African sugar industry in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The Cape Tramways Daimler CVG6/6 squeezed into the James Hall Museum of Transport, with the same operator's Weymann-bodied Ransomes trolleybus 19 behind and Johannesburg 1649, a 1958 Busaf-bodied tri-axle BUT trolleybus, on the right.



and insurance, the boiler certificate for a Sentinel steam bus, purchase of additional vehicles for the collection, the website and its updating. Open days raise awareness of the museum when preserved London Transport AEC Regent RT2634 gives rides to the public, all funded by donations as museum admission is free.

South Africa does have a lottery, but the money raised appears not to go to important museums like this one. Staff are dedicated, friendly and helpful. It is easy to find from the open-top Johannesburg tourist bus, which stops outside, less so if driving by car as there is a distinct lack of signposts

The huge six-wheel Johannesburg Guy in store at the James Hall Museum.



even when getting close. ■
 ■ www.sandstone-estates.com
 ■ www.jhmt.org.za