

THE ARRIVA LONDON STORY

THE BEGINNING - 1938 TO 1980



The roots of Arriva are in Sunderland, where the company still has its head office. Back in 1938 the Cowie family opened a second-hand motorcycle shop in Sunderland. That was the first venture by what has grown to be an international business trading in nine European countries.



In 1960 the company – still called Cowie – moved into motor retailing, and in 1965 became a public company.



In 1980 it started to purchase bus companies with the acquisition of the Grey-Green bus company in London. They operated primarily in the commuter coach and private hire markets.



1986 TO 1995



In 1986 London Transport Buses started to tender bus services in London and Grey Green were awarded the 173 service in February 1987 followed by the 125 and 24 in November 1987. Route 24 was the first major central London route to be awarded to a private operator under London Transport's tendering programme.

South London Transport was the last of the London Bus subsidiaries to be sold in 1995 to the Cowie Group with garages at Brixton, Norwood, South Croydon and Thornton Heath.

In 1994 the Cowie Group bought Leaside Buses as part of the London Buses Privatisation plan. Leaside operated from six garages at Clapton, Enfield, Tottenham, Stamford Hill, Wood Green and Palmers Green.



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1996 TO 2005

Cowie make further acquisitions which include County Bus, Kentish Bus and Londonlinks Bus Company. This has a significant effect on London with the Kentish bus site at Battersea transferring to London control in 1997, followed by the County Bus operation at Edmonton in 1998, and Londonlinks at Beddington Farm in 1999.

In 1997 the Cowie Group change their identity and the Arriva brand is introduced across all the subsidiaries, forming Arriva London North, Arriva London South and Arriva London North East.

Arriva London wins its first Bendy Bus contract from TfL and introduces bendy buses onto route 149 between London Bridge and Edmonton Green.



2005 ONWARDS

On 9 December 2005 Arriva operated London's last regular Routemaster in service on route 159. For many years Arriva had been London's largest Routemaster operator with over 180 buses operating on routes 19 (Battersea – Finsbury Park), 38 (Victoria – Clapton Pond), 73 (Stoke Newington – Victoria), 137 (Streatham Hill – Oxford Circus) and 159 (Streatham – Marble Arch).

Following the withdrawal of Routemasters from regular service in London, Arriva established 'The Arriva Heritage Fleet' to ensure that the much loved vehicles would be available for hire and could still be seen in and around London.

In March 2007, Arriva joined forces with Transport for London to trial the world's first Hybrid double decker bus. The groundbreaking bus will reduce CO2 emissions by more than 30 per cent, using a combination of electric power and a small diesel engine, which keeps the battery pack charged. The vehicle also recycles energy normally wasted whilst braking.

