

# Welcome to UJX 920M



I'm Chris Cocksedge and I was a pupil at **Crossley and Porter School** from 1977 to 1984. On leaving school I worked in insurance for Sun Alliance, which eventually became Royal Sun Alliance. After 20 years I took voluntary redundancy and started various ventures on my own. My final venture was a popular food outlet in Luddenden Foot, which flourished in spite of the fact that on my first day I couldn't even fry an egg!

I got chatting one day to one of my regulars, who turned out to be Tony Blackman, who owned local bus company, Halifax Joint Committee and Yorkshire Heritage Bus Company Ltd. (wedding bus hire). Discussion turned to the whereabouts of the orange and green, old Halifax liveried, single decker bus UJX 920M, seen here. Tony suggested that I get my PCV licence and he would give me a job. I decided to do this and went to work for him, doing college runs in the week and driving his vintage vehicles at weekends. I subsequently worked at

TJ Walsh and, more recently, at South Pennine Community Transport based at Honley.

All this involvement with buses prompted me to buy UJX 920M in May 2017; at that time it was owned by Stoneywood Vehicle Recovery. I'd travelled on this particular bus a great deal in the 70s and 80s, as it regularly worked the number 31 Copley service, along Skircoat Green, where I grew up.

While in Stoneywood's ownership, it was



totally submerged in their unit in Sowerby Bridge, during the floods of November 2015. As a result there have been problems with the vehicle but hopefully we're over these now! The bus ventures out occasionally for weddings, Halifax Heritage events and private trips. Graham McIntyre, who taught biology at Crossleys in the 1970s, recently used the bus for a family day out.

Ironically, I now drive part-time for First Bus and my afternoon run is taking students from Crossleys home to Barkisland and Rishworth. If you'd like to discuss using UJX 920M for an event, you can find me at the school gates from 15.00 to 15.25 on weekdays during term time.

For those who would like more details about the bus, it was delivered new to the then Halifax Corporation on December 12th 1973, so it will be 50 years old before the end of this year. It was the last bus to be delivered in the very striking orange and green colour scheme prior to deregulation in 1974; later buses were dark green and cream. There were only 12 of this model made (at Plaxton, York) and all of them came to Halifax. This is the only one remaining, so is a totally unique vehicle. With its 11-litre engine and semi-automatic gearbox, it effortlessly climbs the hills of Halifax. It forms part of the Town and District Trust Bus Collection in Accrington but spends most of its time in Halifax.

The main photo shows the bus passing through Skircoat Green in 2019 and was taken by Ady Steele, who is a great supporter of the bus and regularly drives it. My 'co-pilot' in the photograph is Andrew Binns, who is also a Crossleyan.



## School friends on a day out

Chris was the driver for this group's day out and John Stanger writes:



Since our 50-year anniversary school reunion in 2014, our group of friends has maintained contact. Originally, Charmaine Bamforth, Jhone Helliwell, Rita Whittell, John Stanger, Stephen Priestley and Jeffrey Tinkler met two to three times a year in differing local hostelrys. Later we found Ian O'Connor to add to the group. Rita and Charmaine do the hard yards by driving from Thame, Oxfordshire, and South London respectively. This meeting was at McCafferty's in Halifax town centre and was to be followed by a meal at nearby Sapore Italian restaurant. Only Ian could have arranged our method of transport! We were taken there by the scenic route, via a run up to school.

“ Thank you school reunions, without which our group may never have found one another! ”

