

CROSSLEY TENDER
ACCESSION NUMBER 71/V/1070

Built as a Type 8 20/25hp 4X2 light tender, the Crossley Tender being the standard RFC personnel carrier; some 4,000 were used by the RFC and RAF 1915 – 1918, being known as light tenders. This particular example is a GS (General Service) variant as restored, and has an engine of circa 1917 date.

Former baker's roundsman's delivery van; it latterly carried a truck body and canvas top. Civilian registration not recorded.

Acquired by vehicle collector Mr. John Cuthill Sword, Head of the Scottish Motor Traction bus and haulage company, and by 1958 it was kept at East Balgray Farm, near Irvine, in Ayrshire along with the rest of his sizable private collection of some 180-plus veteran and vintage motor vehicles. He died in 1960.

- 12 Mar 65 Sale of remaining Sword collection vehicles at auction. As Lot 7, the Crossley was sold for £400 to dealer and collector Cecil J Bendall of Hitchin, Herts, described in Veteran and Vintage magazine as being in 'rather sad' condition. Following the sale of much of the rest of the collection in September 1962, it had been hoped to use the others to form the basis of a Scottish motor museum at East Balgray, but this did not prove possible due to the remoteness of the site and the rest of the collection was auctioned also.
- Sep 71 Advertised for sale in the September 1971 issue of Motor Sport, price £1500; Purchased by RAFM from Mr. Bendall. Described as being mechanically sound and having new tyres all round and as having been used in 'numerous films, displays etc'.
- c.Sep 71 Delivered to RAFM facility at RAF Henlow, Herts under its own power, complete with original acetylene and paraffin lamps.
- May 72 Restoration began at RAF St. Athan, Glamorgan as an authorised engineering task. Chassis refurbished and new bodywork fitted, with a few detail inaccuracies due to lack of information at the time. Old body discarded.
- 5 Sep 72 Completed vehicle rolled out at St. Athan; restored as 11 seat vehicle with registration M 14629. Photo – Royal Air Force Museum 1972 – 1975 p.11.
- c. Oct 72 Transported by RAF vehicle to RAF Museum Hendon in time for the Royal opening in November 1972. Displayed in upper gallery three until moved to Bomber Command Hall 11 September 2002, pending display in Grahame White Hangar. Photo during move; Wingspan International 14 p.8.

11 Aug 03 Moved across to Grahame White hangar for storage pending public display from 17 December 2003.

Photos on display – Aircraft Illustrated January 1973 p.31; RAF Museum Guidebook 1974 Edition p.4; the Crossley Register Newsletter No 66 pp.40 (in a detailed article on the vehicle, which includes photographs of the vehicle prior to restoration)

One of only three known good condition survivors of the type, the others being at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra and one, Reg BK 3238, privately owned by Mr T. Fryas near Skipton, North Yorkshire.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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