

GRAVELING. Harry Gedney t/a FLEETWAY COACHES 12 Stocks Lane, CORBY

As revealed in paper NN-GR3 detailing the history of Harry Graveling and Alfred Wootton's Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd, early in 1952 the two owners of the company disagreed and decided that each should go his separate way. Harry Graveling retained the contract element of the Thistle business and henceforth operated from his home at 12 Stocks Lane, Corby. It is understood that he took five of Thistle's coaches but it is far from certain exactly what these were. The five vehicles shown in red on page 5 are the ones thought to have been retained by Harry Graveling. Alfred Wootton continued to operate from Upper Benefield under the Thistle title and kept the Corby - Glasgow service and the Excursions and Tours from Upper Benefield.

At the end of February 1952 an application was submitted to the Traffic Commissioners for permission to operate an Express Service from Brigstock U.S. Army Camp on a daily basis to Kettering, Station Road - presumably to facilitate travel between the Camp and Kettering Railway Station. For reasons unknown the application was submitted in Harry Graveling's wife's name - Edith Mary Graveling - but, following objections from United Counties, the application was withdrawn.

Thereafter all applications to the Traffic Commissioners were made in the name of Harry Graveling trading as Fleetway Coaches. In June 1955 Harry applied for an Express Service to run between Molesworth U.S.A.F. Base and Kettering Market Place on a daily basis but when the licence was granted under reference TER 4713/1 (Primary) and TER 4713 (Backing) the operation was restricted to Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year except for the period 28th July to 21st September when it operated on Sundays and Mondays, always restricted to the carriage of U.S.A.F. personnel.

As far as vehicles were concerned, Harry Graveling bought only used rolling stock and between 1952 and 1955 quickly added to, or replaced, part of his fleet with an array of different models as listed on page 5. Coaches of Bedford, Leyland, Dennis, Guy and

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Crossley manufacture were all acquired, some lasting only a short time and others for several years. The livery of Fleetway Coaches was mixed, with most vehicles remaining in the colours in which they were purchased second-hand.



This Daimler CH6 registered GO 5538 and carrying Park Royal coachwork definitely passed from Thistle to Harry Graveling's Fleetway Coaches.

(Photo courtesy S L Poole/Omnibus Society).



Harry Graveling acquired this 1937 Dennis Lancet registered CVC 700 circa 1953 and the chassis carried a thirty-two seat Willowbrook body.

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Harry Graveling's business was built entirely on contract and private hire operations. In 1955 Harry decided to expand his business and rented the Elmington Garage and Filling Station near Warmington from the Shell-Mex Petrol Company. One of the reasons for doing so was to provide a base to facilitate the operation of a number of contracts he had secured for Oundle School. Whilst Harry looked after the Warmington site his right-hand man John Sherratt was charged with running the Corby operations. Sadly, early in 1956, Harry Graveling was taken ill and died at the untimely age of 35 years.

Thereafter Harry's wife Edith ran the business for the next three years and the Molesworth to Kettering Road Service Licence was transferred to her as TER 4814/1, but from May 1957 the eastern terminal was moved from Molesworth to the U.S.A.F. base at Alconbury.

During the period between 1956 and 1958 a further seven coaches joined the Fleetway operation, again all second-hand machinery and comprising a Maudslay Marathon, a Commer Q4, a Leyland Tiger PS2 and four Bedfords, three of which were OBs and the fourth an SB model. Examples of a few of these machines are reproduced on the following pages.

In July 1959 Edith Graveling decided to sell her coaching business to John Sherratt who thereafter traded as J.C.S. Coaches - see paper NN-SH7 - and so ended Fleetway Coaches.



The second of the Bedford OBs Fleetway bought in 1957 was GTX 551 and it was photographed after the firm was sold to John Sherratt who thereafter traded as JCS Coaches.
(Photo courtesy D M Bailey)

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Fleetway Coaches added this Bedford OB registered FBC 904 to its fleet when it was nine years old in 1957. It had earlier operated for Central of Uppingham.

(Photo courtesy M A Sutcliffe).



The last coach to be bought by Mrs Edith Graveling was this Bedford SB with a Yeates Riviera body and registered AEK 149.

(Photo courtesy D M Bailey).

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STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	CXO 565	Bedford	WTL	4161.M	Willmott	C26R	?	8/36	c2/52	12/53	Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd	Stockwood Motors Corby (Dealer)	
	AJL 773	Leyland	Tiger TS2 (Rebuild)	1002	Alexander	C32F	?	1/47	c2/52	3/52	Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd	?	
	GO 5538	Daimler	CH6	9061	Park Royal (1936)	C31F	?	4/31	c2/52	?	Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd	No further owner	
	EN 8977	Daimler	CVD6SD	14368	Longwell Green A.C.B.	C33F	?	5/47	c2/52	12/53	Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd	A Wray & Son Ltd, Summerbridge	
	DJR 347	Dennis	Lancet	716J3		FC33F	?	3/50	c2/52	?	Thistle Services (Benefield) Ltd	?	
	FJW 102	Bedford	OB	58623	Mulliner	C28F	T104	1/48	7/52	-/54	Kilsby Motor Services, Kilsby	Cunningham, Hempnall	
	CVC 700	Dennis	Lancet	171182	Willowbrook	C32F	2954	9/37	c-/53	?	Waterhouse, Droylesden	?	
	AAL 486	Leyland	Tiger TS6	2263	Leyland	C32R	?	8/33	-/54	3/54	J A Leah, Hustwaite	No further owner	
	HAY 601	Dennis	Lancet 11	175087	Willowbrook	DP39F	2839	5/51 (10/36)	4/54	7/59	Brown, Markfield	No further owner, Scrapped	1
	KTU 725	Guy	Arab III	FD33204	Santus	C33F	?	?	by5/54	?	Roberts, Crewe	?	
	FJU 499	Crossley	SD42/6	97642	Duple A	C33F	?	5/49	8/54	9/56	Deacon & Hardy, Barlestone	?	
	FJW 105	Bedford	OB	62459	Mulliner	C28F	T123	1/48	by12/54	3/58	?	Stephens, Rainham	
	CBV 313	Crossley	SD42/7	97919	Trans-United	C33F	?	4/49	2/55	7/56	Wesley, S.Goldington	No further owner	
	MWE 98	Maudslay	Marathon III	70580	Burlingham	FC33F	?	-/50	by5/56	4/59	Hibberd, Sheffield	Marshall, Blackpool	
	FRY 79	Commer	Q4	15B8422S	Plaxton	C30F	525	3/49	by 11/56	?	Evans, Birmingham	?	
	FBO 725	Leyland	Tiger PS2/3	500173	Burlingham	FC33F	?	-/50	by 11/56	-/59	Lees, Worksop	Marshall, Blackpool	
	BPR 501	Bedford	OB	27852	Duple Vista	C29F	42396	-846	by 1/57	9/58	Nevill, Fillongley	Mansbridge, Cliddesden	
	GTX 551	Bedford	OB	57064	Duple Vista	C29F	48278	9/47	1/57	7/59	Sansam, Sheffield	Sherratt, Corby	
	FBC 904	Bedford	OB	76874	Duple Vista	C29F	44515	6/48	7/57	7/59	Central Garage, Uppingham	Sherratt, Corby	
	AEK 149	Bedford	SB	10476	Yeates Riviera	C35F	321	12/52	9/58	7/59	Baker, Aldershot	Sherratt, Corby	

Vehicles listed in red are those that probably transferred from Thistle Services circa February 1952, but this cannot be confirmed.

Notes: 1 - HAY 601 was originally registered JL 3733.