

WRIGHT. Harry George t/a Wright's Motor Services 12 High Street and later Wollaston Road IRCHESTER

Harry George Wright was born at Irchester on 9th February 1891, the eldest of a family of fifteen children, a number of whom did not survive to reach adulthood. After leaving school Harry worked at the Irchester Co-op Grocery Department where he trained as a tea mixer. In July 1914 he married Agnes Griffin and during the First World War served in the Royal Navy Air Arm. After demobilisation Harry Wright returned to Irchester and in 1923 opened his own grocery shop at 12 High Street. It is not known precisely when Harry Wright decided to venture into motor bus operation but he was certainly up and running by 1925. He developed services from Irchester to both Wellingborough and Rushden catering for workers, school children, shoppers and leisure seekers but unfortunately a timetable of his services has not been seen by the Author.

In addition, nothing whatsoever has been discovered relating to Harry Wright's early fleet which almost certainly must have comprised second-hand rolling stock. However, it is known that to house his vehicles Harry had a wooden garage constructed in Wollaston Road, Irchester on the site of the present motor garage in this thoroughfare, and petrol was also retailed from this location. Around about 1929 Harry and his wife and children moved to 182 Station Road, Irchester and in February 1934 sold their grocery business in High Street. Following this a wooden hut was erected on the quite extensive forecourt of the Wollaston Road garage, from which groceries were sold.

Returning to the subject of Harry Wright's rolling stock, the livery of which has been described as 'drab' by those recalling his vehicles, Harry was probably running two buses by the end of 1929. Interestingly both were replaced by new stock in February and March 1930. Firstly Harry Wright purchased a Commer 5P chassis to which he had fitted a

Bygone Buses

of
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This August 1925 photograph of Wollaston Road, Irchester depicting the Co-op Children's Gala Day also incidentally shows part of the wooden structure that is believed to have been Harry Wright's garage. The building in question is the one to the rear and nearside of the lorry and not the farm buildings to the right.

(Photo courtesy Jon-Paul Carr collection).

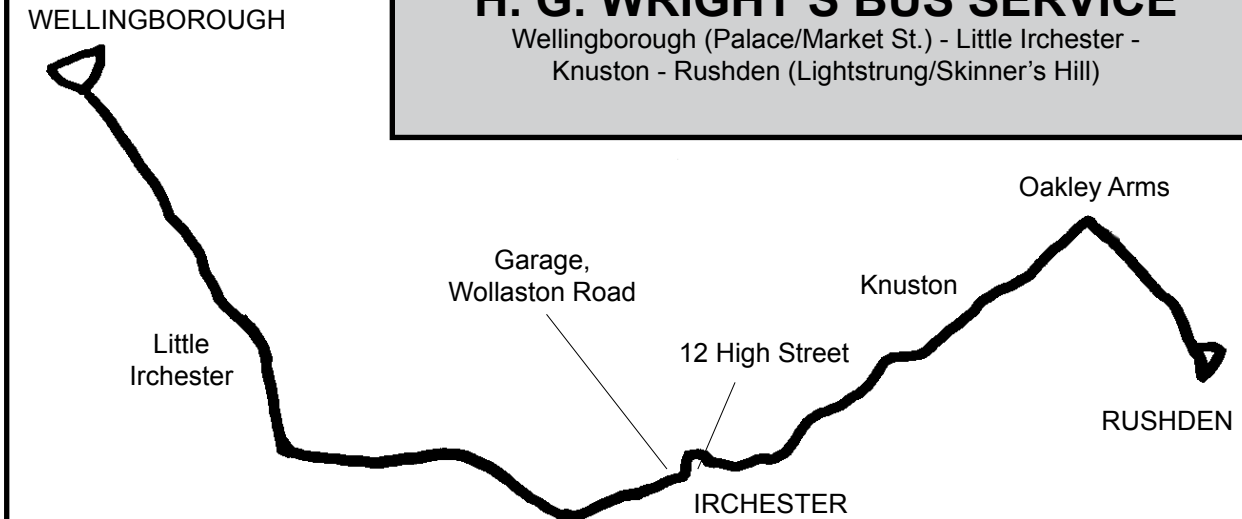
twenty-seat Willowbrook body and this bus was registered RP 8420 on 28th February 1930. Secondly it was joined just over a fortnight later by RP 8532, which was a Chevrolet LQ model onto which Messrs. York, Ward & Rowlatt of Wellingborough mounted a fourteen-seat bus body. This particular vehicle was licensed on 17th March 1930, thus completing the replacement of Harry Wright's older vehicles in a remarkably short time span.

A possible reason for Harry Wright renewing his fleet in 1930 may have been his awareness of the impending legislation which culminated in the Road Traffic Act of 1930. Be this as it may, the introduction of Road Service Licensing in 1931 was to lead Harry Wright into submitting applications to the Traffic Commissioners for two such licences. The first, which in due course took the Commissioners' reference TER 452/1, was to continue the stage-carriage service he had operated during the past year between Rushden, Irchester and Wellingborough. The second was for an Excursions & Tours licence from Irchester, TER 452/2, for three vehicles authorising Wright to operate tours to London, Skegness, Leicester, Newmarket, Ascot, Doncaster, Epsom, Northampton (football), Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Bournemouth and Southsea. At the time these applications were submitted, Harry Wright was showing his address as High Street, Irchester but by December 1932 he was using his Wollaston Road address.

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H. G. WRIGHT'S BUS SERVICE

Wellingborough (Palace/Market St.) - Little Irchester -
Knuston - Rushden (Lightstrung/Skinner's Hill)



Concurrently with submitting his applications for licences to the Commissioners Harry Wright purchased a Gilford CP6 demonstration coach in November 1930, which would have been eminently suitable for the operation of his seaside excursions. This machine, dating from January 1930, was registered VX 3821 and carried a twenty-seater Duple coach body.



A rather indistinct photograph of Gilford VX 3821 showing 'Irchester' on its destination indicator and 'Wright's Motor Services' on its waist band.

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From the late 1920s Harry Wright had built up his excursion programme and as well as the usual seaside day trips, race meetings and football matches, he conveyed holiday-makers on a period basis for their annual vacations on the East Coast, particularly to Great Yarmouth.

Whether or not Harry Wright was looking to dispose of his bus business by 1933 is unknown but at this time United Counties was in the process of taking over the services of other operators running in the Irchester, Wollaston, Bozeat and Olney areas, these being Messrs Davis of Lavendon and Messrs Drage Bros. of Bozeat so, from United Counties' point of view, it made sense for the Company to consolidate the services of the above two operators together with Harry Wright's route into its own timetables. With this in mind the Managing Director of United Counties Omnibus & Road Transport Co Ltd was authorised by his fellow Directors to purchase the Goodwill of Harry Wright's business for £1,600, representing £1,250 for the Goodwill, £250 for the Gilford and Commer and £100 for the Chevrolet. In the event the purchase price of £1,400 was finally agreed and the Chevrolet was excluded from the sale, with Harry Wright thereafter converting it into a caravan for his own use for a short time. United Counties applied to the Traffic Commissioners to incorporate Harry Wright's timings into its own schedules and thus took over from 25th March 1933.

Harry Wright continued to retail petrol until just before the War and his wife carried on with the grocery sales. After these businesses were sold, the garage was bombed in May 1941 and completely destroyed. Meanwhile Harry had transferred to Welwyn Garden City where he ran a NAFFI during the war, later returning to Wellingborough Midland Road Rail Station where he was employed as a ticket clerk.

The Author is greatly indebted to the late Harry Wright, George Robbins (who drove for Harry Wright for a period) and Jon-Paul Carr, an expert on Irchester local history matters, for their valuable assistance with this paper.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
							New	S/H	W/D			
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	by -/25	2/30?	?	?	
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	c -/26?	3/30?	?	?	
RP 8420	Commer	5P	27013	Willow-brook	B20F	2337	2/30	—	3/33	—	United Counties (292)	
RP 8532	Chevrolet	LQ	60374	Y.W.&R.	B14F	—	3/30	—	3/33	—	To caravan	1
VX 3821	Gilford	CP6	10933	Duple	C20F	1714	1/30	11/31	3/33	Ex-Demonstrator	United Counties (291)	

Notes: 1 - RP 8532 retained by Wright and converted into a caravan. Last owned by P Gray, Titchmarsh and last licensed 9/35.