

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-PE5A
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PETERBOROUGH MOTOR 'BUS Company Limited (85269) 4 Cross Street, PETERBOROUGH

Readers of paper NN-PE6A concerning the Peterborough Omnibus & Carriage Co Ltd, which provided the City of Peterborough with a network of horse bus services between 1896 and 1905, will be aware that the introduction of electric trams within the City in 1903 effectively killed off many of the horse bus operations. One option open to the Omnibus & Carriage Company to compete with the trams was to experiment with motor buses but these were in their infancy and had yet to be proved reliable.

It would appear that only the Chairman of the Omnibus & Carriage Company, Alderman Daniel Redhead, had sufficient faith in the future of motor buses to be prepared to sink any money into their promotion. At the Omnibus & Carriage Company's 1904 Annual General Meeting Redhead intimated to the Shareholders that there was the possibility of something happening before the next year's meeting which would be a benefit to the Company. It was not for him to say what that 'something' was but they were looking forward with great hopes.

That 'something' involved motor buses and readers are referred to paper NN-MO1A which relates to the Montgomery Motor Co Ltd which was another concern in which Daniel Redhead, with others, had an interest and which was progressing simultaneously with the developments described in this paper.

Accordingly a company entitled the Peterborough Motor 'Bus Company Limited was incorporated on 17th July 1905 with a nominal capital of £5,000 divided into 5,000 Shares of £1 each. The seven subscribers were:-

John Goode, Cross Street, Peterborough - Merchant
Edwin Scott Anderson, 123 Cromwell Road, Peterborough - Merchant
Bernard Goode, Gazeley Hall, Farcet - Cattle Salesman
George Scott, 63 Padholme Road, Peterborough - Electrician
James Montgomery, 7 All Saints Road, Peterborough - Motor Engineer
Robert Benjamin Stokes, 1 York Terrace, Lincoln Road, Peterborough - Clerk
Frank Owen Goode, Gazeley Hall, Farcet - Farmer

Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire is compiled by R M Warwick, "Forestyn" 101 Broadway East, Northampton NN3 2PP, who would be pleased to be advised of any additional information relating to the above operator. The records of the PSV Circle and the Omnibus Society have been consulted extensively for this series and acknowledgement and thanks are due to these organisations.

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Five of these subscribers were the same gentlemen who subscribed to the Montgomery Motor Co Ltd and the fate of the two concerns was inter-linked.

The Registered Office of the Motor 'Bus Company was situated at 4 Cross Street, Peterborough and the Directors were Daniel Redhead (Chairman), John Goode and Major C H Millward of Kibworth.

On Saturday 12th August 1905 the following report appeared in the *Peterborough Advertiser*:-

NEW MOTOR 'BUS SERVICE for PETERBOROUGH and DISTRICT.

Company Formed and Traffic Being Arranged.

The Mayor as Chairman

The Peterborough Motor 'Bus Company Limited, about which there has been a good deal of talk since it has been known that the old horse 'busses may soon stop, is now interesting, and it is said that the first 'bus will start in a few weeks' time.

The new Company is to have a share capital of £5,000, divided into 5,000 ordinary shares, and the Mayor of Peterborough (Ald. D. H. Redhead. J.P.), the chairman of the old Omnibus Company, is chairman of the directors. Mr. John Goode, of Cross Street, Peterborough, is the Managing Director, and another director is Major Milward. R.A., of Kibworth. The Company will establish a service of motor omnibusses in Peterborough and District for a radius of about 20 miles, for the conveyance of both passenger and other traffic; will arrange for the collection, quick transit, and delivery of dairy and farm produce, Royal Mails, newspapers, and any other goods and parcels within a radius of 15 to 20 miles, and to and from the surrounding districts, and the various railways for which Peterborough is the recognised centre.

An important fact is that the motor 'busses are made entirely in Peterborough, and their manufacture may be expected to open up a new era in the commercial life of the City. An arrangement had been effected with Messrs. Werner, Pfleiderer, and Perkins, Limited, by which the Company will be supplied with their patent "Mercial" Chassis, of the best and most modern make, embodying in the opinion of the manufacturers, and other experts, all the latest improvements with the highest standard of efficiency in the most simple form. The "Mercial" is a combination of all the principal mechanical parts in one compact "Tractor," centrally suspended, and so maintaining correct alinement, arranged so that driving becomes a matter of the greatest simplicity, and can be done by any average working man. The manufacturers will maintain the 'busses for the first six months, and at the end of that time it is expected that the capability of the vehicles for doing the work will have been tested.

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It is proposed to run a service of motor 'busses to and from New England, via Park Road and Westwood Street at regular intervals; to and from Newark, via Broadway; to and from Yaxley, through Stanground and Farcet every two hours; to the Ortons, through Woodstone; and from Klondyke, through Palmerston Road, and Woodstone. They will run a service once daily to and from Peterborough, through Deeping, Postland, and Crowland; to and from March, through Stanground, Whittlesey, Benwick, Doddington, and Wimblington; and to and from Stilton, through Stanground, Farcet, Yaxley, and Norman Cross. Arrangements will be made with railway companies, newspaper proprietors, and postal authorities, for the delivery of parcels, daily papers, and mails, by the first early 'bus to the various villages and towns, to collect them on the evening 'busses, and bring them to Peterborough for forwarding to various destinations. It is expected that ultimately the revenue from this source will pay the cost of running 'busses on these long journeys, and that receipts from passengers carried will be profit. The places mentioned being some distance from stations, the company expect to have a monopoly of the traffic. One or two 'busses will also be kept for the conveyance of special parties to and from seaside resorts, Hunstanton, Skegness, and other places and towns where there may be attractions, according to arrangement.

The Company estimate the working of five 'busses as follows, it being understood that 80 per cent. of the motor 'busses can be kept running:-

RECEIPTS.

Four 'busses running an average of 500 miles weekly, and earning 1s. per 'bus per mile, total per annum £5,200. It is estimated that the 'busses on long distances will carry mails, papers, and parcels yielding a revenue of at least 6d. per mile, and that there will be at least six passengers, and on market days it is expected that full loads of 36 will be carried.

EXPENDITURE.

Fuel per 'bus per mile, 1¼d.; driver and conductor. 1¼d.; tyres 2d. and repairs 1¼d. 3¼d.; depreciation at rate of 20 per cent. per annum, 1¼d.; insurance, rates, rents, etc., ¾d; management, expenses, oils, etc., ¾d.; total cost of running per 'bus per mile, 9d. Total cost of running four 'busses 500 miles each week or a total of 26,000 miles per 'bus per annum, £3,900, leaving a profit of 3d. per mile, or a total net profit of four 'busses running 500 miles each per week of £1,300, out of which a dividend could be paid at the rate of £25 per cent. per annum on the total capital of £5,000. The Company will begin by running one 'bus, so that practical experience may be gained for the development of the business. At the end of three months the makers will be able to deliver further 'busses as they are required.

If only! What a rosy picture was painted in the Newspaper article! The reality was quite different. Research by the Baker Perkins Historical Society suggests that only three

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Mercial chassis were actually built. The Peterborough City Council Watch Committee Minutes record the granting of Hackney Carriage Licences to motor omnibuses as follows:-

30th May 1905 - A motor omnibus belonging to the Montgomery Motor Company having been inspected by the Committee was licensed to carry 11 passengers - No.90. If it was registered surviving records fail to reveal its index mark.

6th April 1906 - A motor omnibus belonging to the Peterborough Motor 'Bus Co Ltd having been inspected by the Committee was licensed to carry 16 passengers - No.49.

Four days after inspection by the City Council a 10hp Mercial omnibus was registered as FL 146 to the Peterborough Motor 'Bus Co Ltd. It was a single-deck bus weighing 2¼ tons and was painted blue and yellow.

The above entries in the Watch Committee Minutes must surely refer to two of the three Mercial chassis known to have been built, but why was the Mercial chassis to prove unsatisfactory for bus operations? Both the local and national commercial motor press are silent about any trials or road tests taking place at Peterborough. Following the high expectations given to the public by the *Peterborough Advertiser's* report it might be expected that further comment from the public would appear in the papers, but none has been noted. The Author surmises that the Mercial chassis weighing 2¼ tons and fitted with a 10hp engine must have been grossly underpowered to carry passenger loads of eleven or sixteen people. The chassis was later advertised for delivery vans, again without success as local tradesmen were reluctant to move away from the trusted horse.

So it would seem that the Peterborough Motor 'Bus Company Limited never operated public services at all. At the end of December 1906 some 882 Shares were in circulation, of which 500 had been issued to John Goode (but later dispersed) fully paid up in consideration of his part in forming the Company. The remaining 382 Shares had been issued for cash and at this time were held by the following:-

Montgomery J	1	Goode B M	26
Goode J	176	Scott G	1
Anderson E S	76	Redhead D H	250
Stokes R B	51	Millward C H	50
Goode F O	1	Little E C	250

This remained the position until 27th January 1911 when a Resolution was passed "That it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Meeting that the Company cannot, by reason of its liabilities, continue its business, and that it is advisable to wind up the same, and accordingly that the Company be wound up voluntarily and that John Rich Smart of Queen Street, Peterborough, Chartered Accountant, be and is hereby

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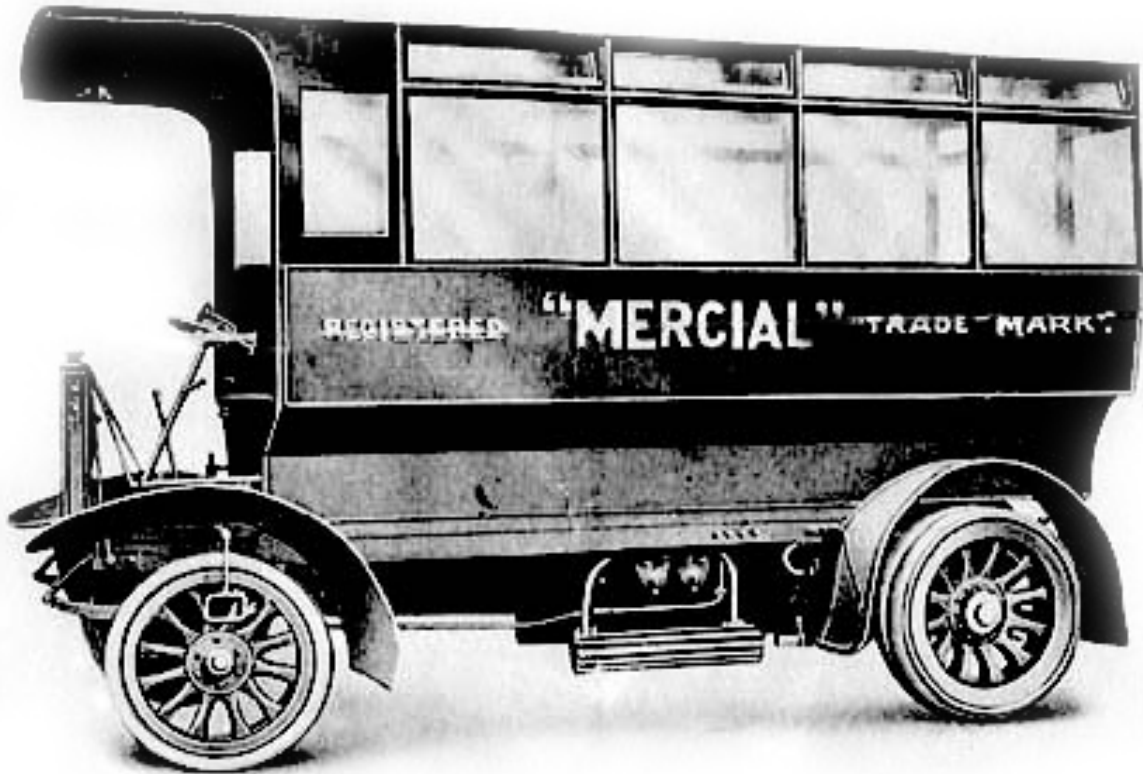
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appointed Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up." Signed Daniel H Redhead, Chairman. The final winding up meeting was held on 28th May 1912.

A rather sad end to such a promising enterprise.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Type & Seats	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
						New	S/H	W/D			
FL 146	Mercial	10hp	?	Montgomery	B16R	4/06	—	?	—	Not traced	



A Mercial chassis fitted with a bus body that was presumably intended to be operated by the Peterborough Motor 'Bus Company. Passenger access would have been via steps at the rear of the vehicle.

Telegrams: "Goode, Peterborough"
Telephone: 9171, Peterborough.

THE PETERBOROUGH MOTOR 'BUS COY., LTD.

Directors

AID. D. H. REDHEAD, Esq., J.P. (Chairman)
MAJOR MILWARD, B.A.
JOHN GOODE, (Managing Director)
E. C. LITTLE (Secretary)

4, Cross Street,
Peterborough, 30th October 1906.