

HEEPS. Albert Norman The Poplars GUILSBOROUGH

It was in 1872 that Norman Albert Heeps entered the world and he lived to be ninety years old. He became a blacksmith and during the late nineteenth century built up a business, based on Naseby, which comprised half-a-dozen smithies, situated at Cold Ashby, Thornby, Haselbech, Maidwell, Guilsborough and Naseby.

Clearly, Albert Norman Heeps was an enterprising man as, by the turn of the century he is said to have had around 100 Raleigh bicycles available for hire from his Naseby premises. Heeps was also one of Northamptonshire's earliest pioneers of the motor car and, in the last century, established a garage at his premises at The Green, Guilsborough. He sold, in due time, the products of the Royal Enfield factory and later added Rover vehicles to his dealership. As the garage business developed at Guilsborough, Albert Norman Heeps gradually disposed of his various blacksmith's shops to other people. In 1914 he built a house known as "The Poplars", adjacent to his garage site at Guilsborough. When completed, Heeps moved to this village and thereafter agricultural engineering formed the backbone of his business interests.

The London & North Western Railway timetables, for at least the period 1904 to 1908, list details of a conveyance being operated from Guilsborough at 9.20am for Brixworth to arrive in time to connect with the 10.12am train to Northampton and returning from Brixworth at 10.30am. Whilst Albert Norman Heeps is not mentioned by name, it is understood that it was he who provided the service.

In 1912 Albert Norman Heeps bought a lorry which, when not used as such, was fitted with a bus body constructed by a Spratton builder. With this machine, Heeps inaugurated a Guilsborough - Hollowell - Creaton - Spratton - Chapel Brampton - Northampton service which, no doubt because of the War, seems to have been short lived. It is understood that after the first World War Albert Norman Heeps recommenced the Guilsborough to Northampton service. One of his drivers was John Smith, who lived at Creaton, and it is believed that in about 1924 Heeps sold his bus(es) and the service to Smith who thereafter ran in his own right.

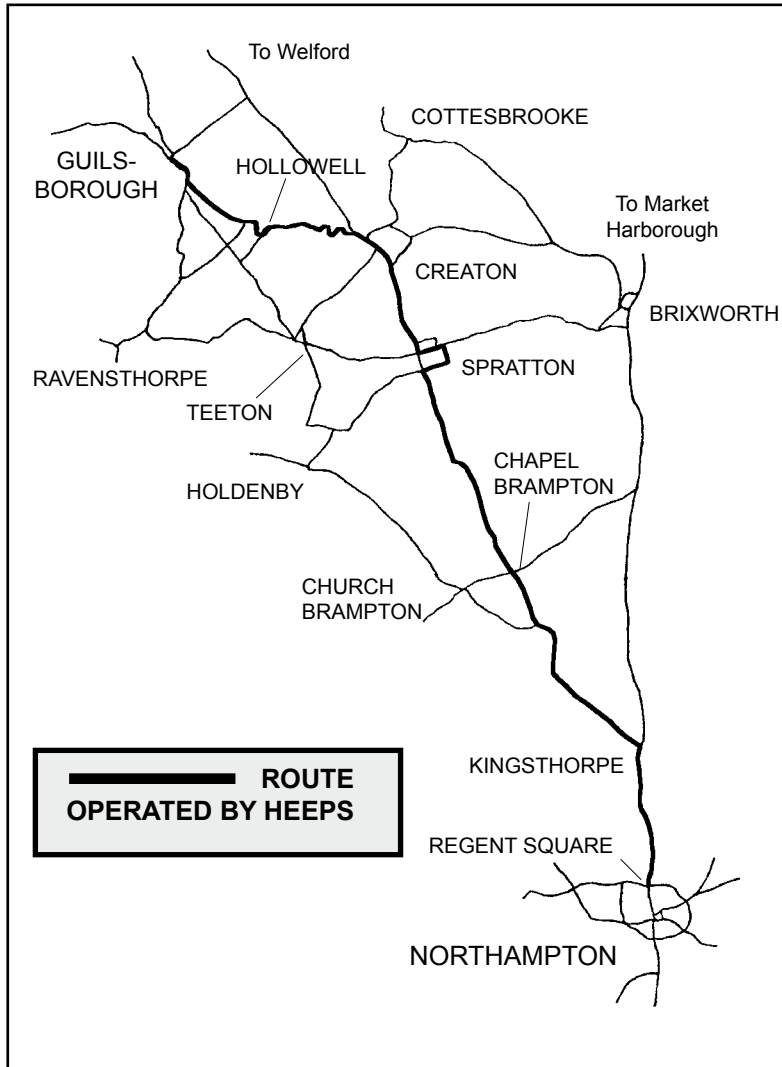
Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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Page 2

HEEPS, Albert N. - GUILSBOROUGH



Over the years Norman Heeps acquired a collection of large cars and taxis and amongst his known fleet were BD54 - a Ford landaulette - and BD 556 - a Daimler landaulette. Heeps built up a profitable business in conveying parties of local dignitaries, with which the countryside abounded, to shooting parties and the like. He also conveyed the gentry to the local rail stations, to London or to the sporting activities being held in the north and west of the County. In February 1921 Albert Norman Heeps bought a Dodge which became registered BD 3925 which he used for public transport purposes and was successful in gaining work to provide transport for the School of Equitation at the nearby Weedon Ordnance Depot.

As mentioned above, Albert Norman Heeps disposed of his local bus service interests in about 1924 but he continued to operate vehicles on private hire. In December 1931 he bought a

second-hand Chevrolet U twenty-seater bus from United Counties, who had acquired it earlier in the same year from an independent operator who's business the Company had acquired. The Chevrolet was registered RP 9905 and Heeps ran it until after the second World War.

Albert Norman Heeps and his wife, Mary, were blessed with twins in 1900 - a boy and a girl - and, rather confusingly, they named the boy Norman and the girl Ida Mary. Hence, the father is always referred to as "Albert Norman Heeps" in this account and the son is referred to as just "Norman Heeps". In 1923, Albert Norman Heeps suffered a heart attack, which was not to prove fatal, and he was destined to outlive his wife, who died in 1932, and both his children, who died in the 1950s. Albert Norman Heeps lived to be 90 years of age and died in December 1962. As a result of his heart attack in 1923, Albert Norman Heeps handed over the Guilsborough business to his son, Norman, who henceforth operated the firm without interference from his father. In 1927 Norman, the son, opened a second garage which was located at West Haddon.

Following the outbreak of the second World War, the Military Authorities apparently

HEEPS, Albert N. - GUILSBOROUGH

commandeered Norman Heeps' Chevrolet bus but were later obliged to allocate him a couple of Morris Commercial lorries, which had formerly been brewery vehicles, for use as buses to transport P.O.Ws from Sulby Camp and Land Army girls from local hostels. Both lorries were fitted with slatted wooden seats for the purpose. In addition labourers and construction workers were conveyed from Kingsthorpe, Northampton to Bitteswell Aerodrome when that establishment was being built by Wilson's Construction of Northampton.

From at least 1943, a school contract service was operated from Cottesbrooke, Creaton, Teeton and Hollowell to Guilsborough School. Initially the route was worked by limousines which Norman Heeps used as taxis in his business and in 1943 the service was earning 7/-d (35p) per day. Either late in the War or immediately after it, a navy blue Bedford/Duple vehicle was allocated to Norman Heeps and when delivered it was fitted with slatted wooden seats although, at a later date, conventional upholstered seats were installed. Another school contract from Winwick and Elkington to Yelvertoft school was in operation by 1946 and in 1950 a Bedford OB with Duple 29 seat coachwork was bought, from British Timken of Northampton. This vehicle was not very old and, being a Bedford, was fitted with Skefco bearings which was a feature that did not endear it to the Management of British Timken. Accordingly Timken replaced this coach with a Commer Avenger and sold the Bedford to Heeps Garages. Apart from buses, Norman Heeps supplied lorries to operate on contracts for other firms – Smith's Timber Company and Messrs Kottler & Heron Construction being two such customers. Norman Heeps also had other business interests and, for example, owned Marshall's Coachworks in Northampton.

In 1950 Norman Heeps was taken ill and the business was managed and operated by his right-hand man, Peter Chapman. After a couple of years, Norman Heeps sold his stake in the business to Peter Chapman and Norman died soon afterward, in 1953. Peter Chapman continued to operate coaches, trading as Heeps Garages Ltd.

HEEPS, Albert N. - GUILSBOROUGH

Rolling Stock:

Known fleet - there were other unrecorded vehicles.

REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
	MAKE	TYPE	NO.	MAKE	TYPE/ SEATS	NO.	NEW	S/H	W/D			
?	?				Lorry/ bus		c-/12	?	?			
BN 1375	Napier	38hp			?		-/13	1/19	?			
NH 2557	Dodge	1t3c3q			?		2/20	?	12/39			
BD 54	Ford		3844738		Landalette		11/20	-	by3/27			1
BD 123	Dodge		382409		Tourer		2/21	-	1/31		No further owner	
BD 556	Daimler		16688		Landalette		12/21	-	?			2
BD 3925	Dodge		357095		B		2/21	-	1/26			
BD 6106	Charron		PGM3384		Landalette		9/21	-	10/33		No further owner	
RP 9905	Chevrolet	U	70313	Grose	B20F		3/31	12/31	12/48	United Counties (237)	F E Saul, Spratton	3
?	Morris Commercial				Lorry/ bus							
?	Morris Commercial				Lorry/ bus							
WK 8628	Humber				Taxi							4
NV 4976	Austin				Taxi		-/35					4
HEV 652	?				Lorry		-/39					
?	Bedford	OWB?		Duple	UB32F C29F		c-/44			Ministry of Supply	P Chapman, G'boro	
?	Bedford	OB		Duple	C29F		c-/48	-/50		British Timken, Duston	P Chapman, G'boro	

Notes: 1 - May have dated from 1919. Last licensed to R Belcher, Burton-on-Trent 3/27.

2 - May have dated from 1919.

3 - Commandeered by War Department at unknown date and returned at unknown date.

4 - Taxis used to operate School Contracts.