

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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## **HUMPHREY. Ransford John George & Sons Ernest Edward and Ransford William Ivy Cottage OLD STRATFORD**

Nothing is known to the Author of the early lives of Ransford John George Humphrey and his two sons Ernest Edward and Ransford William, but all three were involved with the operation of buses. It seems that in the very early 1920s a general carrying business was set up operating from 137 High Street, Stony Stratford. It was with one of the Humphreys' goods vehicles - a 1 ton model T Ford with left-hand drive - that the first passenger service was started and this ran from Collingtree to Northampton on Wednesdays and Saturdays only. The Ford was used for the carriage of goods on other days of the week. The Collingtree to Northampton service was operated for a few years only but precise dates are unavailable.

In the Spring of 1924 Ransford Humphrey purchased a Leyland A7 chassis which was delivered to him in March and subsequently fitted with a twenty-six seater single deck body by an unknown coachbuilder. In April 1924 it was registered PP 1686 and photographic evidence shows that the Humphreys' business was still operating from High Street Stony Stratford at this time and evidently the trading name "Victory" was being used. As it was some six years after the end of the first World War that PP 1686 was delivered new, it is possible that Ransford Humphrey used the "Victory" trading name from the date he started his carrier's business.

Following the acquisition of PP 1686 Ransford Humphrey developed other local bus services centering on Stony Stratford and Wolverton and serving nearby villages such as Wicken, Deanshanger, Loughton and Woburn. Within a few years the bus services were of much greater importance to the Humphreys than their general carrying business and so, in 1928, this latter part of their operations was sold to carrier P Westley of Stony Stratford.

Evidently Ransford Humphrey and his sons were impressed by their Leyland single-deck vehicle as they purchased a Leyland Lioness PLC1 in March 1928. It seated twenty passengers but the manufacturer of its body has not been recorded. Whether or not the Humphreys purchased other passenger rolling stock prior to 1928 is also unknown.

Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire is compiled by R M Warwick, "Torestyn" 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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HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford



*Luckily pictorial evidence of Humphreys' wonderful Leyland PP 1686 has survived and what a tremendous impression it must have made when new in 1924! On its rear it carries a "Hackney Carriage 26 seats" plate and, to the left, the number 182 which would undoubtedly have been allocated by Wolverton Urban District Council.*



*The Leyland Lioness was a rare breed in the North Bucks and Northamptonshire areas so it is refreshing to see this photograph of PP 9925 as operated by Humphrey & Sons of Stony Stratford and later Old Stratford.*

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HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford



*Vehicles of Leyland manufacture slotted seamlessly into United Counties' fleet so that after acquisition in 1934 by that Company, Humphreys' PP 9925 was retained for some years. In this view it is seen within Kettering Garage and conveniently shows the rear and nearside of the Lioness.*

A year later, in March 1929, Ransford Humphrey bought a fourteen-seater Chevrolet LQ which was supplied and bodied by Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton. This machine took the registration number KX 2221 as Humphrey was still residing at Stony Stratford at this point. Incidentally, the "Victory" trading name appears to have been used only on PP 1686 as far as passenger vehicles were concerned.

*The Grose bodywork on Humphrey's Chevrolet LQ registered KX 2221 in 1929 was still fairly basic but, no doubt, adequate for the local bus work performed.*





#### HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford

By 1931 Ransford Humphrey had moved from 137 High Street, Stony Stratford, Bucks over the border to Ivy Cottage, Old Stratford and hence the inclusion of this operator in this "Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire" series. Humphrey & Sons' principal service ran between Stony Stratford, Wolverton and Stantonbury, a busy route feeding workpeople from both ends to employment in Wolverton as well as fulfilling the usual shopping and leisure requirements of the area. In addition to Humphrey & Sons, J H Bates and Mrs Jane Brown - both of Wolverton; C Eglesfield and M Jelley - both sometime of Cosgrove and Eastern National all provided services between Stony Stratford, Wolverton and Stantonbury.

In the post-1930 Road Traffic Act era Humphrey & Sons made application to the Traffic Commissioners in September 1931 for four stage-carriage service licences to continue routes operated during the previous year. These were for services running between Stony Stratford and Woburn, Shenley and Great Linford respectively and between Stantonbury and Wicken via Wolverton, Stony Stratford and Deanshanger. For reasons not apparent to the Author, all four applications were withdrawn and in November 1931 substituted by six new applications for stage services and one for an excursions and tours licence. An eighth application was also deposited either at the same time or soon afterwards and this is also shown in the list that follows.

Traffic Commissioners' Reference	Service Type	Details
E15167 (later TER468/1)	Stage	Stantonbury - Wolverton - Stony Stratford - Old Stratford - Deanshanger - Wicken. (Fridays and Saturdays).
E15168 (later TER468/2)	Stage	Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury (Daily).
E15169 (later combined with TER468/1)	Stage	Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Great Linford. (Fridays).
E15170 (later TER468/4)	Stage	Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Shenley. (Fridays & Saturdays).
E15171 (later TER468/5)	Stage	Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Fenny Stratford - Bow Brickhill - Woburn Sands - Woburn. (Sundays).
E15172 (later TER468/6)	Stage	Stantonbury - Wolverton - Stony Stratford - Old Stratford - Potterspury. (Daily).

Continued .....

**HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford**

Continued .....

Traffic Commissioners' Reference	Service Type	Details
E15173 (later TER468/7)	E & T	From Stony Stratford, Wolverton Road Bus Stand.
TER468/8	Stage	Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Shenley - Fenny Stratford - Bletchley, Park Hotel. (Sundays).

The map shows the A5 road route through Northamptonshire. Key locations marked include Potterspurty, Old Stratford, Stantonbury, Great Linford, Old Bradwell, Loughton, Shenley, Fenny Stratford, Woburn Sands, Bow Brickhill, Woburn, Bletchley, Stony Stratford, Wolverton, Old Stratford, Deanshanger, Wicken, and Stantonbury. The map highlights the route between Stony Stratford and Wolverton, and the route between Stony Stratford and Bletchley.

- Stantonbury - Wolverton - Stony Stratford - Old Stratford - Deanshanger - Wicken. (Fridays & Saturdays).
- Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury. (Daily).
- Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Great Linford. (Fridays).
- Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Shenley. (Fridays & Saturdays).
- Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Fenny Stratford - Bow Brickhill - Woburn Sands - Woburn. (Sundays).
- Stantonbury - Wolverton - Stony Stratford - Old Stratford - Potterspurty. (Daily).
- Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury - Old Bradwell - Loughton - Shenley - Fenny Stratford - Bletchley. (Sundays).

**HUMPHREY & SONS' BUS SERVICES**

Eastern National objected to all the above applications but they were nonetheless approved with very little modification in December 1931. It seems probable that the Traffic Commissioners brought all the operators serving the Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury road together at this period to agree a joint and co-ordinated timetable. Certainly all the five independent operators previously mentioned issued a joint timetable at this time, the provision of which was divided into rotas around which all five revolved in turn, covering the entire spectrum of the operation.

HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford

### STONY STRATFORD - WOLVERTON - STANTONBURY

by Messrs.

BATES, BROWN, EGLESFIELD, HUMPHREY & SONS, and JELLEY

by the return journey any Bus operated this group.

WEEK DAY SERVICES														
	N.S.							Saturdays Only						
Stony Stratford...	8 45	9 15	9 45	10 15	10 45	11 15	11 45	12 15	12 23	12 38	12 45	1 0	1 8	1 15
Wolverton P.O....	8 55	9 25	9 55	10 25	10 55	11 25	11 55	12 25	12 33	12 48	12 55	1 10	1 18	1 25
Stantonbury ...	9 0	9 30	10 0	10 30	11 0	11 30	12 0	12 30	12 38	12 53	1 0	1 15	1 23	1 30
Stony Stratford...	1 30	1 20	1 38	1 53	2 0	2 8	2 23	2 30	2 45	2 53	3 0	3 15	3 23	3 38
Wolverton P.O....	1 40	1 30	1 48	2 3	2 10	2 18	2 33	2 40	2 55	3 3	3 10	3 25	3 33	3 48
Stantonbury ...	1 45	1 35	1 53	2 8	2 15	2 23	2 38	2 45	3 0	3 8	3 15	3 30	3 38	3 53
Stony Stratford...	3 45	3 53	4 8	4 15	4 30	4 38	4 45	5 0	5 8	5 23	5 30	5 38	5 53	6 0
Wolverton P.O....	3 55	4 8	4 18	4 25	4 40	4 48	4 55	5 10	5 18	5 33	5 40	5 48	6 3	6 10
Stantonbury ...	4 0	4 8	4 23	4 30	4 45	4 53	5 0	5 15	5 23	5 38	5 45	5 53	6 8	6 15
Stony Stratford...	6 15	6 23	6 30	6 45	6 53	7 8	7 15	7 23	7 38	7 45	8 0	8 8	8 15	8 30
Wolverton P.O....	6 25	6 33	6 40	6 55	7 3	7 18	7 25	7 33	7 48	7 55	8 10	8 18	8 25	8 40
Stantonbury ...	6 30	6 38	6 45	7 0	7 8	7 23	7 30	7 38	7 53	8 0	8 15	8 23	8 30	8 45
Stony Stratford...	8 38	8 53	9 0	9 8	9 23	9 30	9 45	9 53	10 0	10 15	10 23			
Wolverton P.O....	8 48	9 8	9 10	9 18	9 33	9 40	9 55	10 3	10 10	10 25	10 33			
Stantonbury ...	8 53	9 8	9 15	9 23	9 38	9 45	10 0	10 8	10 15	10 30	10 38			
Stantonbury ...	8 45	9 15	9 45	10 15	10 45	11 15	11 45	12 15	12 30	12 38	12 45	1 0	1 8	1 23
Wolverton P.O....	8 50	9 20	9 50	10 20	10 50	11 20	11 50	12 20	12 35	12 43	12 50	1 5	1 18	1 28
Stony Stratford...	9 0	9 30	10 0	10 30	11 0	11 30	12 0	12 30	12 45	12 53	1 0	1 15	1 23	1 38
Stantonbury ...	1 30	1 20	1 38	1 53	2 0	2 15	2 23	2 30	2 45	2 53	3 8	3 15	3 23	3 38
Wolverton P.O....	1 35	1 25	1 43	1 58	2 5	2 20	2 28	2 35	2 50	2 58	3 13	3 20	3 28	3 43
Stony Stratford...	1 45	1 25	1 53	2 8	2 15	2 30	2 38	2 45	3 0	3 8	3 23	3 30	3 38	3 53
Stantonbury ...	3 45	4 0	4 8	4 15	4 30	4 38	4 53	5 0	5 8	5 23	5 30	5 45	5 53	6 0
Wolverton P.O....	3 50	4 5	4 18	4 20	4 35	4 43	4 58	5 5	5 13	5 28	5 35	5 50	5 58	6 5
Stony Stratford...	4 0	4 15	4 23	4 30	4 45	4 53	5 8	5 15	5 23	5 38	5 45	6 0	6 8	6 15
Stantonbury ...	6 15	6 23	6 38	6 45	6 53	7 8	7 15	7 30	7 38	7 45	8 0	8 8	8 23	8 30
Wolverton P.O....	6 20	6 28	6 43	6 50	6 58	7 13	7 20	7 35	7 43	7 50	8 5	8 13	8 28	8 35
Stony Stratford...	6 30	6 38	6 53	7 0	7 8	7 23	7 30	7 45	7 53	8 0	8 15	8 22	8 38	8 45
Stantonbury ...	8 38	8 53	9 0	9 15	9 23	9 30	9 45	9 53	10 8	10 15	10 23	10 38	10 45	
Wolverton P.O....	8 43	8 58	9 5	9 20	9 28	9 35	9 50	9 58	10 13	10 20	10 28	10 43	10 50	
Stony Stratford...	8 53	9 8	9 15	9 30	9 38	9 45	10 0	10 8	10 23	10 30	10 38	10 53	11 0	

N.S.—Net Saturdays. S.O.—Saturdays Only.

SUNDAY SERVICES														
Stony Stratford...	1 30	1 38	1 53	2 0	2 8	2 23	2 30	2 45	2 53	3 0	3 15	3 23	3 38	3 45
Wolverton P.O....	1 40	1 48	2 3	2 10	2 18	2 33	2 40	2 55	3 3	3 10	3 25	3 33	3 48	3 55
Stantonbury ...	1 45	1 53	2 8	2 15	2 23	2 38	2 45	3 0	3 8	3 15	3 30	3 38	3 53	4 0
Stony Stratford...	3 53	4 8	4 15	4 30	4 38	4 45	5 0	5 8	5 23	5 30	5 38	5 53	6 0	6 15
Wolverton P.O....	4 8	4 18	4 25	4 40	4 48	4 55	5 10	5 18	5 33	5 40	5 48	6 3	6 10	6 20
Stantonbury ...	4 8	4 23	4 30	4 45	4 53	5 0	5 15	5 23	5 38	5 45	5 53	6 8	6 15	6 25
Stony Stratford...	6 23	6 30	6 45	6 53	7 8	7 15	7 23	7 38	7 45	8 0	8 8	8 15	8 30	8 38
Wolverton P.O....	6 33	6 40	6 55	7 3	7 18	7 25	7 33	7 48	7 55	8 10	8 18	8 25	8 40	8 48
Stantonbury ...	6 38	6 45	7 0	7 8	7 23	7 30	7 38	7 53	8 0	8 15	8 23	8 30	8 45	8 53
Stony Stratford...	8 53	9 0	9 8	9 23	9 30	9 45	9 53	10 0	10 15	10 23				
Wolverton P.O....	9 8	9 10	9 18	9 33	9 40	9 55	10 3	10 10	10 25	10 33				
Stantonbury ...	9 8	9 15	9 23	9 38	9 45	10 0	10 8	10 15	10 30	10 38				
Stantonbury ...	1 38	1 53	2 0	2 15	2 23	2 30	2 45	2 53	3 8	3 15	3 23	3 38	3 45	4 0
Wolverton P.O....	1 43	1 58	2 5	2 20	2 28	2 35	2 50	2 58	3 13	3 20	3 28	3 43	3 50	4 5
Stony Stratford...	1 53	2 8	2 15	2 30	2 38	2 45	3 0	3 8	3 23	3 30	3 38	3 53	4 0	4 15
Stantonbury ...	4 8	4 15	4 30	4 38	4 53	5 0	5 8	5 23	5 30	5 45	5 53	6 0	6 15	6 23
Wolverton P.O....	4 18	4 20	4 35	4 43	4 58	5 5	5 13	5 28	5 35	5 50	5 58	6 5	6 20	6 28
Stony Stratford...	4 23	4 30	4 45	4 53	5 8	5 15	5 23	5 38	5 45	6 0	6 8	6 15	6 30	6 38
Stantonbury ...	6 38	6 45	6 53	7 8	7 15	7 30	7 38	7 45	8 0	8 8	8 23	8 30	8 38	8 53
Wolverton P.O....	6 43	6 50	6 58	7 13	7 20	7 35	7 43	7 50	8 5	8 13	8 28	8 35	8 43	8 58
Stony Stratford...	6 53	7 0	7 8	7 23	7 30	7 45	7 53	8 0	8 15	8 23	8 38	8 45	8 53	9 8
Stantonbury ...	9 0	9 15	9 23	9 30	9 45	9 53	10 8	10 15	10 23	10 38	10 45			
Wolverton P.O....	9 5	9 20	9 23	9 35	9 50	9 58	10 18	10 20	10 28	10 43	10 50			
Stony Stratford...	9 15	9 30	9 38	9 45	10 0	10 8	10 23	10 30	10 38	10 53	11 0			

The joint timetable issued by Messrs Bates, Brown, Eglesfield, Humphrey and Jelley on the Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury route in 1932.

**HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford**

Humphreys' Wicken to Great Linford service, their Stony Stratford to Woburn and Bletchley services after extension to start from Old Stratford are shown below.

**Wicken - Deanshanger - Old Stratford - Stony Stratford -  
Wolverton - Stantonbury - Great Linford**

	Fridays							Saturdays	
	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Wicken	10.00	.....	.....	2.15	.....	4.15	7.00	5.00	8.45
Deanshanger	10.15	.....	.....	2.20	.....	4.20	7.05	5.05	8.50
Old Stratford	10.10	.....	.....	2.25	.....	4.25	7.10	5.10	8.55
Stony Stratford	10.15	.....	.....	2.30	.....	4.30	7.15	5.15	9.00
Wolverton	10.25	11.40	1.30	2.40	3.30	.....	.....	.....	.....
New Bradwell	.....	11.45	1.35	.....	3.35	.....	.....	.....	.....
Great Linford	.....	11.50	1.45	.....	3.45	.....	.....	.....	.....
	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.		p.m.	p.m.		p.m.	p.m.
Great Linford	.....	12.00	1.50	.....	3.45	.....	.....	.....	.....
New Bradwell	.....	12.10	1.55	.....	3.50	.....	.....	.....	.....
Wolverton	.....	12.15	2.00	.....	3.55	6.30	.....	.....	.....
Stony Stratford	9.45	.....	2.05	.....	4.00	6.40	.....	4.45	8.30
Old Stratford	9.47	.....	2.07	.....	4.05	6.45	.....	4.50	8.35
Deanshanger	9.50	.....	2.10	.....	4.10	6.50	.....	4.55	8.40
Wicken	9.55	.....	2.15	.....	4.15	6.55	.....	5.00	8.45

*Humphreys' Wicken - Stony Stratford - Great Linford timetable at December 1932.*

**Old Stratford - Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Old Bradwell -  
Loughton - Fenny Stratford - (Bletchley) - Bow Brickhill -  
Woburn Sands - Woburn.**

	Sundays				Sundays		
	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.		p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Old Stratford	1.35	1.55	5.55	Woburn Sands	.....	3.30	.....
Stony Stratford	1.40	2.00	6.00	Woburn	.....	3.35	.....
Wolverton	1.50	2.05	6.05	Bow Brickhill	.....	3.43	.....
Stantonbury	1.55	2.10	6.10	Bletchley	2.30	.....	10.00
Old Bradwell	2.00	2.15	6.15	Fenny Stratford	2.35	3.50	10.05
Loughton	2.05	2.25	6.25	Loughton	2.45	4.00	10.15
Fenny Stratford	2.15	2.35	6.35	Old Bradwell	2.50	4.10	10.20
Bletchley	2.20	.....	.....	Stantonbury	2.55	4.15	10.25
Bow Brickhill	.....	2.43	6.43	Wolverton	3.00	4.20	10.30
Woburn Sands	.....	2.50	6.50	Stony Stratford	3.10	4.25	10.40
Woburn	.....	2.55	6.55	Old Stratford	3.15	4.30	10.45

*Humphrey's Old Stratford to Woburn and Bletchley Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays timetables at December 1933.*



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HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford

The experience of Ransford Humphrey and his two sons with their previous two buses built by Leyland Motors led to the purchase of a third. It is understood that in March 1932 PP 1686 was replaced by a Leyland Cub mounted with a twenty-seat body of unknown manufacture. This attractive vehicle was first licenced on 24th March 1932 as NV 1156 and was the final vehicle bought by the Humphreys.

*A head on view of Leyland Cub KP3 registered NV 1156 photographed at Wolverton Road, Stony Stratford.*



*Again photographed at Wolverton Road, Stony Stratford and no doubt on the same occasion as the previous picture, NV 1156 can be seen from the offside in Humphreys' predominantly cream livery.*



#### HUMPHREY R & Sons - Old Stratford

The main operator in 1933 on the important Stony Stratford - Wolverton - Stantonbury corridor was Eastern National, providing frequent departures over much of the day. Reorganisation within the Tilling Group, which owned both Eastern National and United Counties, led to the services in the Stony Stratford area provided by Eastern National being transferred to United Counties from 1st December 1933. Clearly the presence of five minor operators on the main Stony Stratford -Wolverton -Stantonbury route was a thorn in the side of Eastern National in the first instance and United Counties from December 1933. Eastern National were already in discussion with J H Bates of Wolverton with regard to the purchase of his business, with negotiations concluding in February 1934 when Bates's services passed to United Counties.

With one down and four to go, United Counties was concurrently in dialogue with the remaining operators on the road in question and quickly reached agreement with Malcolm Jelley of Cosgrove in February 1934. Next came Ransford Humphrey & Sons with whom an agreement was signed on 27th June 1934 for United Counties to purchase the business. Applications were immediately deposited by the Company with the Commissioners in June 1934 to take over certain of Humphreys' licences and to incorporate the rest of his services within existing route timetables. However, the task was not completed until Monday 8th October 1934 when United Counties' revised services were brought into operation.

The three buses the Humphreys were operating at this time - i.e. Leyland Lioness PP 9925, Chevrolet KX 2221 and Leyland Cub NV 1156 all passed to United Counties. Provision in the agreement was also made for Ransford Humphrey's two sons - E E and R W Humphrey - to be employed by United Counties and both gentlemen continued as drivers at the Company's Stony Stratford Depot until they retired in the 1960s.

*The Author is most grateful to the late Ernest Humphrey for information regarding his family's bus business.*

#### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
?	Ford	T	?	?	Van/ Bus	—	c-/20		-/28	—	P Westley, Stony Stratford	
PP 1686	Leyland	A7	19794	?	B26D	—	4/24	—	3/32?	—	?	
PP 9925	Leyland	Lioness PLC1	46420	?	B20F	—	3/28	—	10/34	—	United Counties (383)	
KX 2221	Chevrolet	LQ	50290	Grose	B14F	—	3/29	—	10/34	Supp Grose Ltd, Northampton	United Counties (385)	
NV 1156	Leyland	Cub KP3	431	?	B20F	—	3/32	—	10/34	—	United Counties (384)	

Notes: