

LAMB. Thomas George

Central Garage, Banbury Road, BYFIELD

It was on 11th September 1897 at Eydon that Thomas George Lamb was born, the son of a Police Sergeant. His first job when leaving school was working as a delivery boy for a wines and spirits merchant and then, a little later, similar employment was taken up with the local Eydon grocer - Arthur Russell. Thomas Lamb volunteered for Army service during the first World War and served with the Royal Artillery where he was injured in the battle of the Somme in 1916 and was invalided out soon afterwards.

Thomas Lamb returned to civilian life and lived at Woodford Halse. He borrowed money from an uncle, bought a model T Ford van and set up business carrying goods from Woodford Halse to Banbury and Northampton on different days of the week.

Around about 1923 Thomas Lamb moved to Cosy Corner, High Street, Byfield and took over a site in Banbury Road which he established as Central Garage. He continued to operate his van and was able to retail petrol. Within a year or two Thomas Lamb bought a large Austin car from which the original body was removed and a coach-built body seating at least eight passengers was substituted. This vehicle was used as a bus to convey passengers from Byfield and the surrounding area to both Northampton and Banbury on the same routes that he had transported goods. The Austin was painted predominantly red and was nicknamed "Strawberry & Cream".

Evidently the passenger service was a success as Thomas Lamb was able to buy his one and only conventional bus. This was a second-hand Chevrolet which seated fourteen passengers and was registered UE 4660 in July 1927 when it was new to L J Gibson of Radway, Warwickshire. Thomas Lamb probably bought it circa 1929.

Following the introduction of the Road Traffic Act of 1930 Thomas Lamb applied to the Traffic Commissioners for two Road Service Licences in March 1932 to continue the routes he was already operating. The first service was from Byfield via Chipping Warden and Wardington to Banbury and the second was from Byfield via Woodford Halse, Preston Capes, Maidford, Litchborough, Bugbrooke and Kislingbury to Northampton. The two licences were duly granted in June 1932 with the Northampton service having a special condition placed upon it preventing the picking-up and setting-down of passengers for

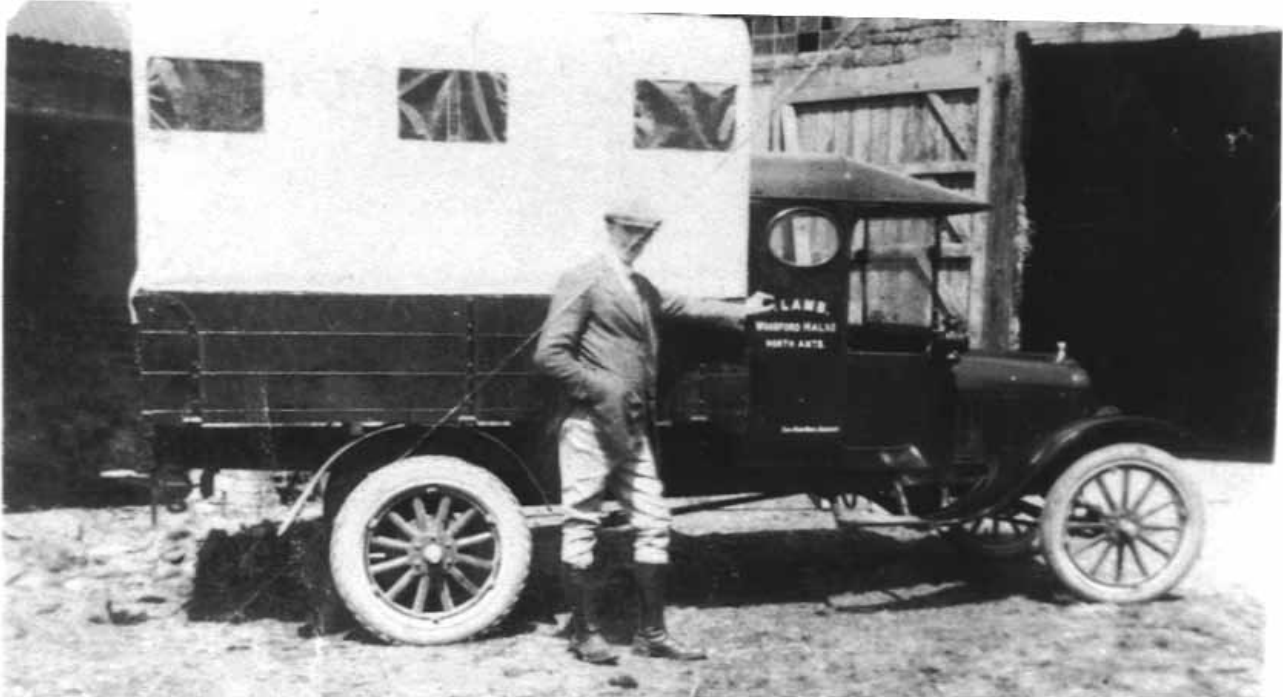
Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-LA3

Page 2

LAMB. Thomas George, BYFIELD



Thomas Lamb's first Ford T lorry with covered top which was operated when he resided at Woodford Halse.



Another Ford T van attractively sign written "T Lamb, Woodford". It is possible this vehicle was used at times to carry passengers.

LAMB. Thomas George, BYFIELD

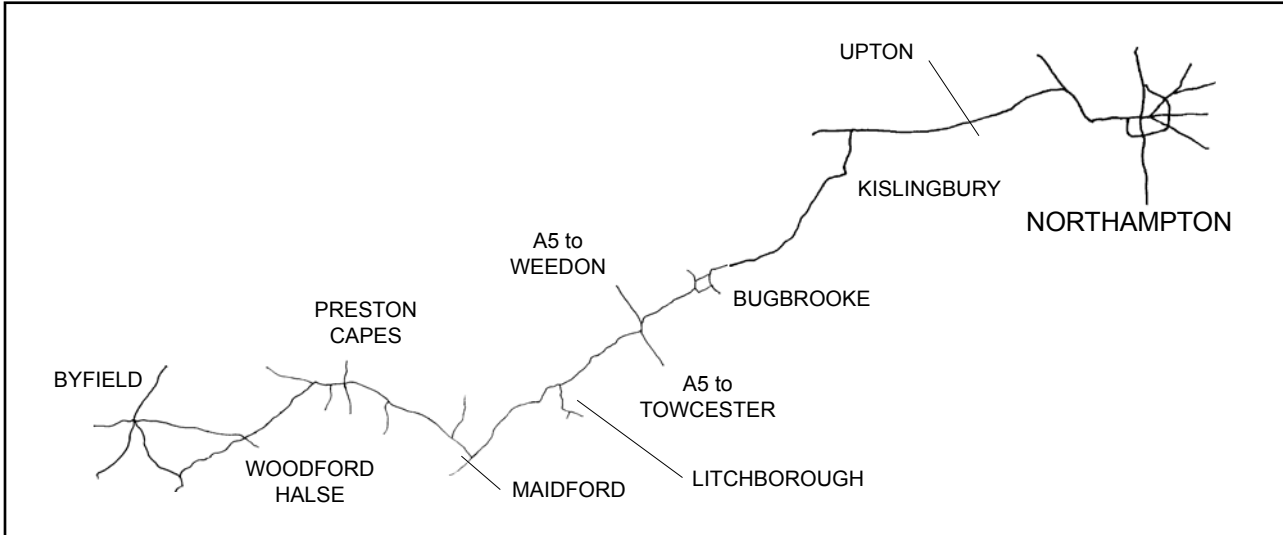


Thomas Lamb's Chevrolet registered UE4660. Note the luggage rack and roof-mounted spare wheel.

travel entirely within the Bugbrooke to Northampton section of route. The Banbury route operated on Mondays at 11.00am from Byfield, returning from Banbury at 3.00pm and on Thursdays leaving Byfield at 10.30am and returning from Banbury at 4.00pm. The Northampton service operated on Wednesdays and Saturdays leaving Byfield at 9.45am and returning from Northampton at 4.00pm. In addition, Thomas Lamb had a school contract for the conveyance of pupils from Upper Boddington, Aston-le-Walls and Lower Boddington to Byfield School. Thomas Lamb was not the only operator on the routes he served and competition, in effect, prevented his operations being cost effective. In May 1933 K.W. Services of Blakesley applied to amend its Eydon to Northampton service to incorporate Lamb's route and in February 1934, Midland Red acted similarly to include Thomas Lamb's Banbury service within that Company's Rugby - Daventry - Banbury and Banbury - Upper Boddington routes. In this way Thomas Lamb detached himself from bus operations in two separate stages.

After finishing with the operation of buses, Thomas Lamb reverted to the carrying of coal and general merchandise. He removed the seats from the Chevrolet bus and used it as a van. He also started a car hire business, including taxis and continued until his death on 1st June 1956 aged 58 years. At this point Thomas Lamb's son - Kenneth - took over and whilst the taxis business ceased in 1964, Kenneth Lamb now operates the Fiveways Service Station at Byfield.

LAMB. Thomas George, BYFIELD



Thomas Lamb's stage carriage routes: Above - Byfield, Woodford Halse, Preston Capes, Maidford, Litchborough, Bugbrooke, Kislingbury, Northampton (operated Wednesdays and Saturdays) and Left - Byfield - Chipping Warden - Wardington - Banbury (operated Mondays and Thursdays).

Rolling Stock

? - Austin - 8 seater - Acquired second-hand c1923.

UE4660 - Chevrolet LM - C/No 15934 - B14F
- New 7/27 to L J Gibson, Post Office, Radway
- Acquired T Lamb c 1929.

Also owned as a private hire vehicle was **NH 6413** - Buick 22hp of 1925, probably acquired secondhand and last licensed to T G Lamb 7/38.

I am grateful to Kenneth Lamb for his assistance with the preparation of this paper.