

MILLS. John Henry t/a Maroon Bus Service Newland BRIXWORTH

John Henry Mills was born in 1875, a native of Earls Barton as was his wife Mary. The Mills family lived in Earls Barton until sometime in the first decade of the twentieth century when they moved to Brixworth where John became a general carrier.

John Mills' carrier's service operated from Brixworth via the main road to the Cross Keys Inn in Sheep Street, Northampton. Whether or not passengers were carried on this service is not known. However, in October 1924 Mills purchased a Ford T Ton Truck chassis at a cost of £121 from the local Ford agent Henry Oliver Ltd of George Row, Northampton. The chassis then went for bodying, possibly locally by Ben Hasker but not confirmed, and the resulting fourteen-seater bus was registered RP 174 on 29th November 1924. It was painted maroon and John Mills thereafter traded as "Maroon Bus Service" directly between Brixworth and Northampton, Cross Keys.

It is known that the Ford T ended up as a furniture van for Messrs A Watts & Son of Northampton and was last licensed in March 1928. The likelihood is that Mills ran it for just a couple of years before replacing it with a Morris T-type which was new in 1926. Supplied by the Derngate Motor Company of Northampton it is thought that this vehicle - RP 2244 - was again a fourteen seat bus but it is just conceivable that it was always a lorry and used by Mills as such for his general carrier's business. If indeed RP 2244 was not a bus then John Mills must have purchased another passenger vehicle for which no details are known.

The Morris, or the unknown bus referred to above, seems to have kept the service operating until July 1933 when John Mills acquired a Commer Centaur, again seating fourteen, and registered NV 2720.

The Road Traffic Act, 1930 necessitated John Mills applying for a Road Service Licence to continue the operation of the service he had hitherto provided and this he did in

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October 1931. The Traffic Commissioners in due course allocated the reference TER 725/1 to this stage-carriage service which operated on Mondays to Saturdays. Throughout the 1930s the service continued with no change whatever.

Maroon Bus Service

(J. H. MILLS)

Between

Brixworth and Cross Keys

NORTHAMPTON

Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays

LEAVE BRIXWORTH—

10-0 1-15 5-30

LEAVE NORTHAMPTON—

12-0 4-15 6-30

Thursdays

LEAVE BRIXWORTH—

10-0

LEAVE NORTHAMPTON—

1-0

Wednesdays and Saturdays

LEAVE BRIXWORTH—

10-0 1-20 2-50 5-00 6-45 9-15 Sats. only

LEAVE NORTHAMPTON—

12-15 2-20 4-0 6-0 8-30 11-0 Sats. only

Let us Carry your Parcels

A facsimile of J H Mills' Maroon Bus Service timetable current throughout the 1930s.

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John Mills planned to replace his Commer Centaur NV 2720 at the end of 1936 with a Bedford WTB mounted with a Duple twenty-six seat coach body. The vehicle was ordered but for reasons that are not evident the order was cancelled and transferred to Messrs A Adams & Sons of Middleton (NN-AD1) who took delivery of NV 8369 in December 1936. John Mills for his part continued to run his Commer NV 2720 for a further six years. In 1942, the precise date not being evident, Mills acquired a second-hand Dodge coach which accommodated twenty-six passengers in its Duple body and, registered BYL 446, it provided the motive power for the remainder of the time Mills operated the Brixworth to Northampton route.

John Henry Mills was aged 68 in 1943 and doubtless was ready to retire. Rather surprisingly in view of United Counties' operating a frequent service between Northampton and Brixworth, arrangements were made for Sidney Knight of Northampton - NN-KN3 - to take over both the service and the Dodge BYL 446. It maybe the case that John Mills didn't wish to sell his route to United Counties as some private operators resented the dominance of the larger bus companies. Eventually Sidney Knight's daughter Mary transferred the Goodwill of the service to United Counties with effect from 1st May 1952 for a consideration of £150.

Rolling Stock:

REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
	MAKE	TYPE	NO.	MAKE	TYPE/ SEATS	NO.	NEW	S/H	W/D			
RP 174	Ford	T	10627694	Hasker?	B14F	—	11/24	—	-/26?	Supp H Oliver Ltd, Northampton	?	1
RP 2244	Morris	T	8921	?	B14F?	—	-/26	—	7/33?	Supp Demgate Mtr Co, Northampton	?	2
NV 2720	Commer	Centaur	46231	?	B14	—	7/33	—	c-/42?	Supp H Jarrett	?	3
NV 8369	Bedford	WTB	110925	Duple	C20F	8603	12/36	—	—	Supp Yeates, Loughborough	A Adams & Son, Middleton	4
BYL 446	Dodge	PLB	1036	Duple	C26F	5507	7/35	c-/42	c-/43	A Jones (Poplar Coaches), E14	H S Knight, Northampton	

Notes: 1 - RP 174 last owned by A Watts & Son, Northampton and last licensed 3/28 as a van.
 2 - RP 2244 last owned by H Smart, Northampton and last licensed 3/38 as a blue lorry.
 3 - NV 2720 last owned by R Fossett, Northampton and last licensed 12/45.
 4 - NV 8369 was ordered by J H Mills but diverted to Adams & Sons, Middleston. Neither owned nor operated by Mills.