

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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HOCKEY. Roy George & JACKSON. Donald Walter t/a ROYDON MOTORS 52A Havelock Street, WELLINGBOROUGH

Roy Hockey and Donald Jackson formed a partnership that over the years incorporated many transport related businesses of which coach operation was just a part that lasted for only about six years.

One of the partners was Don Jackson who was born in May 1927 and in due course served an apprenticeship with Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt of Wellingborough and thus became a trained vehicle body builder. In due course he worked full-time for both Calor Gas and Rubber Improvements of Wellingborough and part-time as a driver for Shelton's Coaches of Wollaston. The other partner - Roy Hockey - gained his mechanical knowledge from working in Blanchflower's Garage at Kettering and at Horace Wright's Transport prior to joining the Army. Upon demobilisation he returned to Wright's and subsequently British Road Services. From there he moved to Rubber Improvements where he met Don Jackson and the rest, as they say, is history!

Evidently driving coaches for Shelton's of Wollaston gave Don Jackson the idea of operating his own vehicles and in March 1959 he purchased a thirty-three seater Foden PVSC6 coach registered FBU 235, with Bellhouse-Hartwell bodywork, from his former employer. This vehicle carried Jackson's name at both front and rear which suggests that the partnership with Roy Hockey had not commenced at that stage, but the partnership certainly came into being within the first year and from then on the business traded as Roydon Motors.

Initially Don Jackson parked his coach outside his house at 22 Kent Road, Wellingborough pending later acquisition of an operating base. During the first year and, presumably, consequent upon the formation of the partnership with Roy Hockey, a second-hand Bedford OB with standard Duple Vista bodywork, but in this case seating only 27 passengers, was acquired from Osbourne's of Irthlingborough. This vehicle was registered FRW 67 and dated from 1946. Also purchased was a fully-fronted Commer Avenger I coach

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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An offside view of FBU 235, the immaculate Bellhouse-Hartwell bodied Foden coach with which Don Jackson commenced business. (Photo courtesy M A Sutcliffe)



This illustration shows the Foden PSVC6 from the nearside. Jackson's name can be seen in the offside display aperture and no mention of Roydon Motor appears on the coach.

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with a Plaxton Envoy body seating thirty-three passengers. This machine was registered KWR 987 and it is understood it was bought from dealers Errington of Evington. The livery of the coaches at this period was blue and cream.



On the right is the Bedford OB registered FRW 67 bought from Reuben Osbourne of Irthlingborough in 1960 whilst on the left is Commer Avenger KWR 987.

A nearside view of Plaxton Envoy bodied Commer Avenger KWR 987. Note the spatted rear wheels which were a feature of this model of Plaxton coachwork.



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Photographs of the rear of coaches are all too rare, so this picture of the stern of KWR 987 shows the Plaxton styling of the period.

With three coaches in the fleet, garaging accommodation had to be sought and premises at 52A Havelock Street, Wellingborough were rented from November 1960. The main work initially undertaken by Roydon Motors was a contract for Rosebud Dolls of Raunds, which firm also had factory premises in Westfield Road, Wellingborough and this contract involved ferrying the predominantly female workforce from the surrounding villages into Wellingborough and returning them at the end of shifts. Private hire work was also built up over the years, with Blackpool Illuminations being a regular Autumn sojourn each season.

The transport of Rosebud Dolls' personnel led to the transport of the dolls themselves, starting with one Luton van. The business soon snowballed and Roy Hockey and Don Jackson were obliged to review their operations towards the end of 1960. The hours they were driving and working became intolerable and they decided to downsize the current coach fleet from the three presently operated - the Foden, Bedford OB and Commer Avenger - to a single more up-to-date machine. As a result Bedford SB3 registered VHO 463 was acquired with a Burlingham Seagull body and forty-one seat capacity. This coach had been new in the previous year to Finchley Coaches of North London and was an exceptionally reliable vehicle that was highly regarded by its new owners. Now, one coach and two lorries were a much more practical business proposition which the partners felt they could manage. The lorries, or Luton vans, on contract hire to Rosebud Dolls were painted shocking pink, ivory and black so it was decided to similarly paint the Bedford SB3 coach.

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The Burlingtonam Seagull MkVII design was never regarded as highly as the classic original Seagull model but nonetheless VHO 443 on Bedford SB3 chassis was a most acceptable coach in its day.

Roydon Motors held no Road Service Licences with the Traffic Commissioners although in November 1962 they did make application for a workers' service between Wellingborough, Cannon Street and Corby, Stewarts & Lloyd's Works, providing five return trips at shift times on a daily basis. It is unlikely that United Counties would have welcomed such a route and discussions between the two firms may have taken place. Whatever happened, the service did not get off the ground and the application was withdrawn later in November 1962.

Operating just a single coach proved a little restrictive and in 1961 a second-hand Commer Avenger coach registered NBY 150 was bought from Errington's of Evington. This machine carried a Plaxton Venturer body which seated forty-one but was never really liked by its new owners and was disposed of in the following year.

Being now well established, Roydon Motors continued in much the same way for the next three or four years with just an eleven-seater Morris J2 minibus being added to the

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Commer Avenger NBY 150 with its Plaxton Venturer body appeared in the fleets of a number of operators but never for long. Messrs Hockey & Jackson retained it for about a year and it was photographed at Broad Green, Wellingborough in 1961.

passenger stock in early 1963 as URP 288. However, by this time Roy Hockey and Don Jackson decided to treat themselves and their passengers to a brand new Bedford SB5 coach with the very modern-looking Duple Bella Vega forty-one seater bodywork. Thus, in March 1963, 900 DBD was taken into stock and what a striking appearance it made in its pink, ivory and black colours!

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In 1963 Duple Bella Vega coaches were some of the most attractive on the road as can be seen from these nearside and offside views of Roydon Motors' 900 DBD.

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This interior shot of Bedford SB5 registered 900 DBD shows just how light and airy was the Bella Vega coachwork.

A year later another Bedford SB5 with Duple Bella Vega coachwork was added to the fleet bringing the total back to three. This time the coach was registered ARP 900B and it looked much the same as 900 DBD. Unfortunately a photograph of it with Roydon Motors is not available but one with its subsequent owner - Overstone Coaches - is to hand.



This photograph of Bedford SB5 - ARP 900B - was taken whilst the coach was being operated by Overstone Coaches. The beading on the 1964 Duple Bella Vega coachwork was slightly different to the previous year's model but otherwise the two coaches were virtually identical.

Welcome as the fleet increase undoubtedly was, it inevitably meant greater pressure being placed on the owning partners' shoulders. The 1964 season was particularly hectic and further growth in the van fleet for Rosebud Dolls meant that by the Spring of 1965 a decision had to be taken to run either coaches or lorries, but not both. After due consideration and the apparent bright future for Rosebud Dolls, Roy Hockey and Don Jackson decided to stick with the lorries and give up on coaching. It was not an easy decision but one that had to be taken and so the operation of Roydon Motor's coaches ceased in April 1965, the vehicles were disposed of and the tenancy of 52A Havelock Street surrendered.

That's really the end of the story as far as buses were concerned but it is of interest to briefly record Roy Hockey's and Don Jackson's subsequent transport activities. With the disposal of the Havelock Street site and the coaches, the Roydon Motors' lorries were parked overnight at Rosebud premises in both Wellingborough and Rushden and the number of vehicles operated increased to include articulated units. At about this same time Roy Hockey and Don Jackson bought New Street Motors (Irthlingborough) Ltd which was a vehicle repair and servicing business that had been run down. The site was cleared and redeveloped as a car sales showroom and general garage business.

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After a few years it became clear that the future of Rosebud Dolls was uncertain and the firm was taken over by American toymaker Mattel who, after a period, closed down their UK operations. This in turn meant that Roydon Motors' main source of income was lost and replacement contracts had to be sought urgently. One such contract was with Bilofix, a manufacturer of wooden toys. Concurrently, seeing the writing on the wall for Rosebud, Roy Hockey and Don Jackson developed general parcel carrying from the New Street Motors premises. This business grew quickly and the name was shortened to N.S.M. Carriers to cater for the expanding business. Such was the success of N.S.M. Carriers that the partners decided to dispose of New Street Motors at Irthlingborough to concentrate on the Carrier's outfit and, to accommodate N.S.M., a larger site at the rear of the Cresta Service Station on the A6 in Finedon was acquired. Shortly after moving to this new site the transporting of Mobile homes on extended trailers was undertaken. However, as time progressed the growth of the parcels business required more and more capital to finance the opening of depots around the Country and this saw the increasing influence of financiers in the business.

Rather than continue in this way Don Jackson left N.S.M. and set up Commercial Transport Services at Barker's Yard, Wellingborough where his experience in the motor body building trade came into play as this business specialised in the repair of commercial vehicles. Part of his agreement in leaving N.S.M. precluded Don Jackson from operating a road haulage business for a period of five years but on the expiration of this condition Don returned to the business of transporting mobile homes, this time for Messrs Albatross Caravans of Earls Barton, building up a fleet of eight or nine lorries.

It was at this time that Roy Hockey rejoined Don Jackson in partnership and the pair soon formed Wellingborough Crane Hire Co. Ltd. to take advantage of profitable opportunities in this specialised field. Finally, Commercial Transport Services was renamed Roydon Motors Ltd, thus turning full circle from when Roy Hockey and Don Jackson first started to jointly trade. However, shortly afterwards Roy Hockey decided to move to pastures new and the partnership was once again rescinded leaving Don to change his trading name from Roydon Motors to Donald W Jackson (Haulage) Ltd. Clearly neither Roy or Don believed in leading quiet lives!

Sadly Don Jackson died on 10th November 1982 at the comparatively early age of 55 years and shortly afterwards the company bearing his name was wound up. Roy Hockey on the other hand has since retired and now lives in Lincolnshire.

I am most grateful to both Roy Hockey and Don Jackson's son Tony for advice on Roydon Motors' business activities and for the provision of photographs.

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Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Dates			Former Owner	Initial Disposal	Nts
						New	S/H	W/D			
FBU 235	Foden	PVSC6	27746	Bellhouse-Hartwell	C33F	-/49	3/59	c11/60	Shelton Coaches, Wollaston.		
FRW 67	Bedford	OB	29442	Duple Vista	C27F	-/46	by 3/60	c11/60	Osbourne, Irthlingborough.		
KWR 987	Commer	Avenger 1	23A0677	Plaxton Envoy	FC33F		by 3/60	c11/60	Errington (dir)/ Padbett, Mirfield.	Teague, Burnt Oak.	
VHO 443	Bedford	SB3	67920	Burlingham S'gull MkVII	C41F	-/59	c11/60	5/64	Finchley Coaches, N. Finchley.	Thomas, Croydon.	
NBY 150	Commer	Avenger 1	44A5045	Plaxton Venturer	C41F	1/55	c-/61	by 3/62	Errington (dir)/ Newtown, Leicester.	Brady, Chelmsford.	
URP 288	Morris	J2	J2BMS 2721	Morris	C11F	12/59	by 3/63	4/65	—	Skey, Overstone.	
900 DBD	Bedford	SB5	90768	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	3/63	—	4/65	Supp. Errington, Evington.	Moore, Saffron Walden.	
ARP 900B	Bedford	SB5	95131	Duple Bella Vega	C41F	6/64	—	4/65	Supp. Errington, Evington.	Skey, Overstone.	



This photograph shows Don Jackson whilst working part-time for Shelton's Coaches of Wollaston. The vehicle on which he is leaning was CBD 213, a Bedford OWB with Duple V coachwork.