

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-SM5

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## **SMITH. John, t/a Blue Fly Bus Service, Teeton Lane, CREATON.**

Lea's Northampton Directory of 1914 lists John Smith as a carrier operating on Wednesdays and Saturdays from the Criterion public house in Northampton's town centre to Chapel Brampton, Creaton and Teeton. As he would have proceeded via Spratton he possibly carried goods to this village also unless he had an arrangement to the contrary with Spratton based carriers.

It is not known how long John Smith, usually known as Jack, continued with this business or, indeed, whether he served in the First World War. However, after the War Jack Smith was driving buses on a Guilsborough to Northampton service being operated by Norman Heeps of Guilsborough (NN-HE2). Whether Norman Heeps abandoned his bus service in 1923 or sold the goodwill of the route to Jack Smith is uncertain, but in July 1923 Jack bought a used Ford T lorry which was registered BD 3068. It is understood that forms were placed in or on this vehicle for the carriage of passengers and Jack Smith ran to Northampton on Wednesdays and Saturdays as he did in 1914.

The breakthrough into the operation of bespoke bus services in Jack Smith's own right came in the following year, 1924, when on 3rd June Jack bought his first REO Speed Wagon bus which was a fourteen-seater registered BD 9550. Messrs Allchin & Son of Kingsthorpe Grove, Northampton was the local REO agent so it is likely that Jack Smith bought this and most of his subsequent REOs from this source.

Concurrently with purchasing BD 9550 Jack Smith made application to Northampton Borough Council Watch Committee for a Hackney Carriage Licence to operate a charabanc from Campbell and Regent Squares, Northampton and this was granted. All the evidence suggests that Jack Smith was quite successful with his passenger service which ran from Creaton via Spratton and Chapel Brampton to Regent Square whilst the carriers side of the business was given up or, at least, the parcels and goods were henceforth carried on the buses rather than being carried by lorry.

Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire is compiled by R M Warwick, "Forestyn" 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.

#### SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON

As far as rolling stock was concerned Jack Smith favoured REO buses and bought no other makes. Over the next six years he built up his fleet to six vehicles - all Speed Wagons. In June 1925 he purchased RP 1182 which was a twenty-seat REO and followed this up in July 1926 with another similar bus. This one was registered RP 3124 and was supplied by Messrs Harris & Hasell of Bristol who were the sole concessionaires in Great Britain and Ireland for the American built REO chassis.

Unfortunately, at an unknown date in the latter part of 1926 the REO registered RP 1182 was destroyed by fire. It seems to have been replaced by a second-hand REO originally purchased by Thomas Miller of Welford (NN-MI4) and may have been acquired direct or via Allchin's. This particular machine was registered RP 206 and was also a twenty-seater. No new buses were purchased in 1927 but two more REOs took to the road in 1928 in Jack Smith's blue and white livery. These were registered RP 5469 and RP 5715 respectively in March and April 1928, both seating twenty passengers. The only other vehicles known to have been taken into Jack Smith's stock was yet another REO, a second-hand vehicle supplied by Messrs Allchin & Son and having earlier served with Jelley's Coachways of Cosgrove (NN-JE3). This was a 1925 model with fourteen-seat bodywork, registered RP 713.

It is not known exactly when Jack Smith decided to name his service "The Blue Fly Bus Service", possibly right from the start. Whenever it was, his first bus was named "Blue Fly" - presumably BD 9550 - and thereafter each bus was named after a different kind of fly. Apart from "Blue Fly" others remembered were "May Fly", "Gad Fly" and "Fire Fly" which, hopefully, was not RP 1182 which was consumed by flames! RP 5715 was definitely "Dragon Fly" and a photograph of it has survived and is shown on the next page.

*This photograph of Spratton Church also depicts a REO bus in Church Road, allegedly in 1928, and whilst not identifiable, is pretty certain to be one of John Smith's fleet - but not "Dragon Fly".*



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SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON



*This interesting picture of REO Speed Wasgon - RP5715 - taken in High Street, Spratton shows (a) "Blue Fly Service" displayed at the front; (b) "The Dragon Fly" and "to Guilsborough" on the side and (c) although not legible on this illustration, the side route board reads "Brampton, Spratton, Creaton, Hollowell". Albert Branson was the driver.*

Returning to the subject of Jack Smith's service, in view of Jack having driven Norman Heeps' buses between Guilsborough - Hollowell - Creaton - Spratton - Chapel Brampton and Northampton it may well have been that he operated from Guilsborough rather than Creaton from the beginning, but no evidence has been seen to confirm this. However, if Creaton was the original northern terminus, this had been moved to Guilsborough by March 1926 at the latest. No doubt as Jack Smith acquired his second and third buses the service was increased from Wednesdays and Saturdays operation to a daily timetable. Evidently from Monday 11th June 1928 the route was again extended northwards to include Thornby and Naseby. Once more at an unknown date a shoppers facility was operated to Market Harborough on Tuesday market days.

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SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON

**NOTICE TO TRADESMEN  
WORKPEOPLE, Etc**

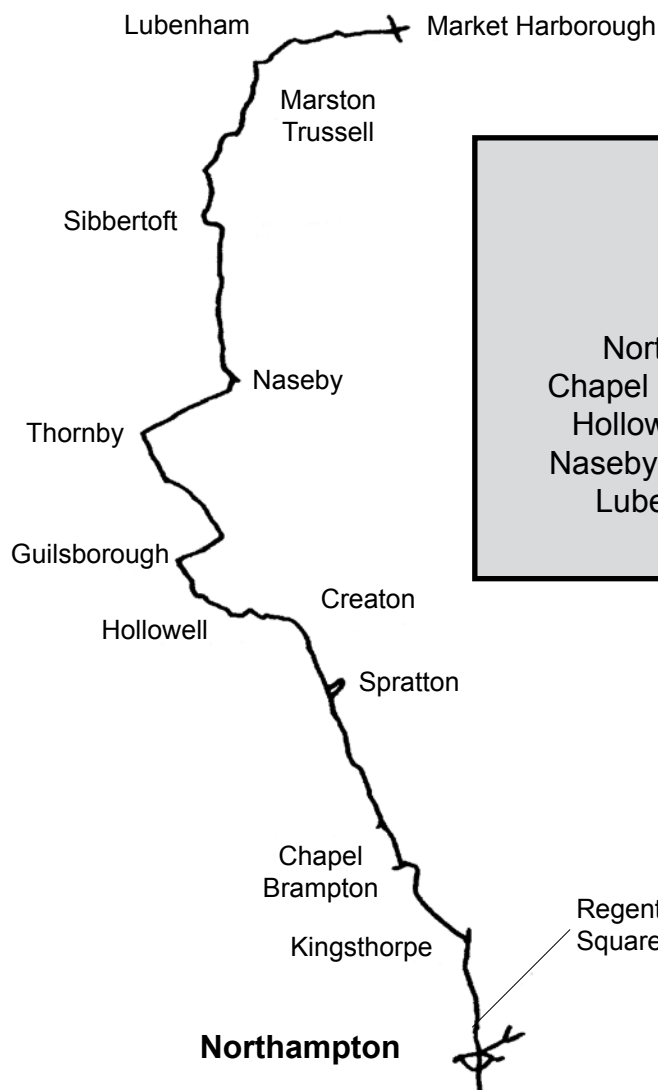
### THE BLUE FLY BUS SERVICE

Has now been Extended to  
**THORNBY and NASEBY**

An Additional Bus leaves at 7.30 a.m. each day for all Villages, and at 2.45 p.m. on Sundays.

THE NEW TIME-TABLE can be seen at the "WHEATSHEAF," Regent-square.

*A facsimile of an advertisement placed by Jack Smith in the Northampton Daily Chronicle of 11th June 1928, giving notice of the extension of his Blue Fly service to Thornby and Naseby.*



### John Smith's "Blue Fly"

Bus Service:

Northampton (Regent Square) -  
Chapel Brampton - Spratton - Creaton -  
Hollowell - Guilsborough - Thornby -  
Naseby - Sibbertoft - Marston Trussell -  
Lubenham - Market Harborough.

SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON

The "BLUE FLY" Bus Service between NORTHAMPTON, GUILSBOROUGH AND NASEBY, calling at Intermediate Villages. Starting at Regent Square.

SUNDAYS.

LEAVE	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Northampton	1 40	2 0	2 15	2 45	3 30	5 30	5 45	6 40	8 30	8 45	9 0	—
Brampton	1 50	2 10	2 25	2 55	3 40	5 40	5 55	6 50	8 40	8 55	9 10	—
Spratton	2 0	2 20	2 35	3 5	3 50	5 50	6 5	7 0	8 50	9 5	9 20	—
Creaton	2 5	2 25	2 40	3 10	3 55	5 55	6 10	7 5	8 55	9 10	9 25	—
Hollowell	2 10	2 30	2 45	3 15	4 0	6 0	6 15	7 10	9 0	—	9 30	—
Gullesboro'	2 15	2 35	2 50	3 20	4 5	6 5	6 25	7 15	9 5	—	9 35	—
Thornby	—	—	2 55	—	—	—	6 30	—	—	9 20	—	—
Naseby	—	—	3 5	—	—	—	6 40	—	—	9 30	—	—

LEAVE	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Naseby	—	—	—	1 45	—	4 30	—	—	—	—	—	7 50
Thornby	—	—	—	1 55	—	4 40	—	—	—	—	—	8 0
Gullesboro'	—	1 0	—	2 0	2 20	4 45	—	5 50	7 30	7 50	8 0	8 10
Hollowell	—	1 5	—	2 5	2 25	4 50	—	5 55	7 35	7 55	8 5	8 15
Creaton	12 55	1 10	1 35	2 10	2 30	4 55	5 0	6 0	7 40	8 0	8 10	8 20
Spratton	1 0	1 15	1 40	2 15	2 35	5 0	5 5	6 5	7 45	8 5	8 15	8 25
Brampton	1 10	1 25	1 50	2 25	2 45	5 10	5 15	6 15	7 55	8 15	8 25	8 35
Northampton	1 20	1 35	2 0	2 35	2 55	5 20	5 25	6 25	8 5	8 25	8 35	8 45

§ Creaton Sanatorium.

\* Market Harborough on Tuesdays.

† Thursdays only.

‡ Saturdays only.

The "BLUE FLY" Bus Service between NORTHAMPTON, GUILSBOROUGH AND NASEBY, calling at Intermediate Villages. Starting at Regent Square.

MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS and FRIDAYS

LEAVE	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Northampton	7 0	7 30	8 30	10 0	12 0	1 30	2 0	4 0	4 15	5 0	5 30	6 0	6 15
Brampton	7 10	7 40	8 40	10 10	12 10	1 40	2 10	4 10	4 25	5 10	5 40	6 10	6 25
Spratton	7 20	7 50	8 50	10 20	12 20	1 50	2 20	4 20	4 35	5 20	5 50	6 20	6 35
Creaton	7 25	7 55	8 55	10 25	12 25	1 55	2 25	4 25	4 40	5 25	5 55	6 25	6 40
Hollowell	7 30	8 0	9 0	10 30	12 30	2 0	2 30	4 30	4 45	—	6 0	—	6 45
Gullesboro'	7 35	8 5	9 5	10 35	12 35	2 5	2 35	4 35	4 50	—	6 5	—	6 50
Thornby	7 40	8 10	9 10	—	12 40	2 10	—	—	4 55	—	—	—	6 55

LEAVE	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Thornby	—	—	7 40	8 40	—	—	12 50	—	—	—	—	—	5 5
Gullesboro'	—	—	7 45	8 45	—	11 0	1 0	—	2 50	—	—	4 50	5 10
Hollowell	—	—	7 50	8 50	—	11 5	1 5	—	2 55	—	—	4 55	5 15
Creaton	6 25	6 45	7 55	8 55	—	11 10	1 10	2 50	3 0	—	4 30	5 0	5 20
Spratton	6 30	6 50	8 0	9 0	—	11 15	1 15	2 55	3 5	—	4 35	5 5	5 25
Brampton	6 40	7 0	8 10	9 10	—	11 25	1 25	3 5	3 15	—	4 45	5 15	5 35
Northampton	6 50	7 10	8 20	9 20	—	11 35	1 35	3 15	3 25	—	4 55	5 25	5 45

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\* Market Harborough on Tuesdays.

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Jack Smith's Blue Fly timetable for Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays current at December 1930.

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SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON

The "BLUE FLY" Bus Service between NORTHAMPTON, GUILSBOROUGH AND NASEBY, calling at Intermediate Villages. Starting at Regent Square.  
WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS.

LEAVE	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Northampton .....	7 07	7 30	8 30	9 20	10 0	10 30	11 0	11 15	12 0	1 0	1 45	2 0	2 45	3 0
Brampton .....	7 10	7 40	8 40	9 30	10 10	10 40	11 10	11 25	12 10	1 10	1 55	2 10	2 55	3 10
Spratton .....	7 20	7 50	8 50	9 40	10 20	10 45	11 20	11 35	12 20	1 20	2 5	2 20	3 5	3 20
Creaton .....	7 25	7 55	8 55	9 45	10 25	10 50	11 25	11 40	12 25	1 25	2 10	2 25	3 10	3 25
Hollowell .....	7 30	8 09	9 0	9 50	10 30	—	11 30	—	12 30	1 30	2 15	2 35	—	3 30
Guilborough .....	7 35	8 59	9 5	9 55	10 35	—	11 35	—	12 35	1 35	2 20	2 35	—	3 35
Thornby .....	7 40	8 10	9 10	—	—	—	—	11 50	—	—	2 20	—	3 20	—
Naseby arr. ....	—	8 20	9 20	—	—	—	—	12 0	—	—	2 30	—	3 30	—

LEAVE	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Northampton ...	3 30	4 0	4 15	5 0	5 30	6 0	6 15	7 10	7 30	8 15	8 45	9 0	9 45	—
Brampton .....	3 40	4 10	4 25	5 10	5 40	6 10	6 25	7 20	7 40	8 25	8 55	9 10	9 55	—
Spratton .....	3 50	4 20	4 35	5 20	5 50	6 20	6 35	7 30	7 50	8 35	9 5	9 20	10 5	—
Creaton .....	3 55	4 25	4 40	5 25	5 55	6 25	6 40	7 35	7 55	8 40	9 10	9 25	10 15	—
Hollowell .....	3 5	4 30	4 45	5 30	—	6 30	6 45	7 40	—	8 45	—	9 30	10 15	—
Guilborough ...	3 10	4 35	4 50	5 35	—	6 35	6 50	7 45	—	8 50	—	9 35	10 20	—
Thornby .....	—	—	4 55	—	6 5	—	—	—	8 5	—	9 20	—	—	—
Naseby .....	—	—	—	—	6 15	—	—	—	8 15	—	9 30	—	—	—

§ Creaton Sanatorium.

† Thursdays only.

\* Market Harborough on Tuesdays.

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WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS.

LEAVE	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
Naseby .....	—	—	—	—	—	9 15	9 35	—	—	—	—	12 35	—	—	2 30
Thornby ...	—	—	7 40	—	—	9 25	9 45	—	—	—	—	12 45	—	—	2 40
Guilborough	—	—	7 45	8 40	9 0	—	—	10 0	—	11 0	12 0	—	1 0	2 0	—
Hollowell ...	—	—	7 50	8 45	9 5	—	—	10 5	—	11 5	12 5	—	1 5	2 5	—
Creaton .....	6 25	6 45	7 55	8 50	9 10	9 35	9 55	10 10	11 0	11 10	12 10	12 55	1 10	2 10	2 50
Spratton ...	6 30	6 50	8 0	8 55	9 15	9 40	10 0	10 15	11 5	11 15	12 15	1 0	1 15	2 15	2 55
Brampton ...	6 40	7 0	8 10	9 5	9 25	9 50	10 10	10 25	11 15	11 25	12 25	1 10	1 25	2 25	3 5
Northampton	6 50	7 10	8 20	9 15	9 35	10 0	10 20	10 35	11 25	11 35	12 35	1 20	1 35	2 35	3 15

LEAVE	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.H.	P.M.	
Naseby .....	—	2 30	—	—	—	4 0	—	—	—	—	6 20	—	8 30	
Thornby .....	—	2 40	—	—	—	4 10	—	—	—	5 5	6 30	—	8 40	
Guilborough	2 30	—	3 0	4 0	4 10	—	—	4 50	5 10	—	6 45	7 0	8 5	
Hollowell .....	2 35	—	3 5	4 5	4 15	—	—	4 55	5 15	—	6 50	7 5	8 10	
Creaton .....	2 40	2 50	3 10	4 10	4 20	4 20	4 45	5 5	5 20	6 40	6 55	7 10	8 15	8 50
Spratton .....	2 45	2 55	3 15	4 15	4 25	4 25	4 50	5 5	5 25	6 45	7 0	7 15	8 20	8 55
Brampton .....	2 55	3 5	3 25	4 25	4 35	4 35	5 0	5 15	5 35	6 55	7 10	7 25	8 30	9 5
Northampton	3 5	3 15	3 35	4 35	4 45	4 45	5 10	5 25	5 45	7 5	7 20	7 35	8 40	9 15

§ Creaton Sanatorium.

† Thursdays only.

\* Market Harborough on Tuesdays.

‡ Saturdays only.

Jack Smith's Blue Fly timetable for Wednesdays and Saturdays current at December 1930, the provision of which would have called for the use of nearly all his vehicles.

#### SMITH. John (t/a Blue Fly) - CREATON

For a time Jack Smith's son - John George Ambrose Smith - was in business with his father but the two could not get along well together so the son operated on his own from 1927. (See paper NN-SM7).

By 1929 John Smith felt he had had enough of running his buses and possibly the uncertainty of the forthcoming 1930 Road Traffic Act or, alternatively, seeing United Counties Omnibus & Road Transport Co Ltd acquire the services of the Northampton Motor Omnibus Co Ltd in 1928, which brought United Counties onto the Guilsborough road with a good service, may have influenced Jack that it was the right time to quit. Whatever happened, Jack Smith offered his business to United Counties in June 1929 asking for £2,500 for the services and four twenty-seat REO buses. However, the Company was not interested at that time but Jack Smith again offered to sell the services only for £700 in February 1930. This time negotiations between the two parties based on a figure of £500 almost resulted in an agreement but United Counties stipulated that Jack Smith should only continue to run private hire vehicles from the places served on his existing bus route whereas Jack Smith wished to encompass a much wider area.

Another year was to pass before United Counties actually took over Blue Fly with effect from 25th March 1931. It seems that in the intervening period Jack Smith died on 15th December 1930 and his wife, Ada Elizabeth Smith, continued the business for three months prior to disposing of it to United Counties for £800, which sum included the routes and Blue Fly's six vehicles.

#### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
BD 3068	Ford	T	4569600	?	Lorry/Bus	—	7/23	—	?	—	?	1
BD 9550	REO	Speed Wagon F	100387	?	B14	—	6/24	—	3/31	—	United Counties (217)	
RP 1182	REO	Speed Wagon F	113766	?	B20F	—	6/25	—	12/26	—	Destroyed by fire	
RP 3124	REO	Speed Wagon F	129868	?	B20F	—	7/26	—	3/31	Supp Harris Hassell, Bristol	United Counties (220)	
RP 206	REO	Speed Wagon F	108552	?	B20F	—	12/24	c9/26?	3/31	T J Miller, Welford	United Counties (218)	
RP 5469	REO	Speed Wagon F	147588	?	B20F	—	3/28	—	3/31	—	United Counties (221)	
RP 5715	REO	Speed Wagon F	146198	?	B20F	—	4/28	—	3/31	—	United Counties (222)	1
RP 713	REO	Speed Wagon F	113185	?	B14F	—	4/25	6/30?	3/31	Allchin & Son, N'pton/ M E Jelley, Cosgrove	United Counties (219)	

Notes: 1 - BD 3068 last owned by L W Collyer, Kettering and last licensed 12/31

2 - RP 5715 was named Dragon Fly.

Each of Smith's buses were named after a fly - other known names were Blue Fly, May Fly, Gad Fly and Fire Fly.