

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**NN-PO1**  
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## **PONTON. William Thomas & Samuel Walter Gladstone House, WALGRAVE and later SCALDWELL**

Current research has proved it impossible to be precise about the Pontons listed in the title of this paper. William was the main character in whom we are interested and Samuel, a blacksmith, was probably his father but may have been his uncle.

What is certain, however, is that William Ponton lived at Gladstone House, Walgrave and it is recorded in the Sales Ledger of Messrs Henry Oliver Ltd of George Row, Northampton - the local Ford concessionaire - that Ponton ordered a one-ton Ford bus on 19th October 1921 at a price of £360 and this was delivered on 29th October 1921. At the same time Registration records show that a dark blue Ford T was registered on 22nd October 1921 in William Ponton's name, tying in with the vehicle ordered from Henry Oliver. However, the Ford T in question was allocated the number BD 152 but the re-issue of void registration marks was not permitted under the Roads Act of 1920, suggesting this vehicle really dated from 1919. If this is the case, Ponton was operating from 1919 and the identity of the Ford T bus bought from Henry Oliver Ltd is unknown.

At this point Samuel Walter Ponton of Walgrave comes into the story as records show BD 3193, a Ford T described as a dark green coach being registered to Samuel Ponton on 10th September 1921. Again this number comes from an earlier period and in fact may really have been a Ford T car dating from November 1915 and known to have been in the hands of the Wellingborough dealer Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt at December 1919. If this is the case the inclusion of this vehicles as a bus may be a red herring and, if the vehicle was used at all, must have operated as a taxi. Its description of being a "dark green coach" is somewhat puzzling. William Ponton is also known to have been operating a black Humber landaulette which was registered new to him in July 1920 as BD 4819 and, no doubt, he also used this as a taxi and hire vehicle.

The next fact in this confused story again comes from the Sales Ledger of Henry Oliver Ltd where it is recorded that William Thomas Ponton ordered a Ford T charabanc on 11th July 1923 and the model supplied at a price of £125 turned out to be a second-hand unit previously operated by Thomas Miller of Welford (NN-MI4). Again no specific details of

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.

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this vehicle are known. By the time this charabanc was ordered, William Ponton had moved from Walgrave to Scaldwell, a village some three miles to the west. It is interesting that William Ponton's address at Walgrave - Gladstone House - later became the operating base of Wilfred Gibson (NN-GI5).

Continuing with vehicles, those listed above did not last for long. The Humber landaulette passed to a Mr W F Heasley of Old and was last licenced in October 1921 whilst the two Fords BD 152 and BD 3193 were decommissioned by the Pontons' in April and December 1923 respectively and had no further owners. Registration records again show that Samuel Ponton of Scaldwell was the last owner of BD 3193 which suggests that as Samuel also moved to Scaldwell, he was William's father rather than uncle. Presumably the Ford T acquired second-hand and previously owned by Thomas Miller of Welford survived with Ponton until 1925 when on 4th March he bought a new Morris fourteen-seater saloon which was registered RP 579. This machine was supplied by the Derngate Motor Co Ltd of Northampton with a body built by an unknown maker.



*The Morris on the left of this picture - RP 579 - belonged to William Ponton of Scaldwell and was painted red and cream. It is most likely that it is William Ponton who stands in front of the vehicle as this operator is not known to have employed other drivers. The Morris on the right - RP 829 - was owned by George Blundell of Spratton.*

PONTON. WT & SW - WALGRAVE/SCALDWELL

So far only the subject of the buses operated by William and/or Samuel Ponton has been discussed and really little else is known other than that William operated a bus service from Scaldwell via Brixworth to the Bull Hotel at Regent Square, Northampton. Having commenced operations in Walgrave it can be assumed that he provided some sort of service from that village to Northampton but, if he did, details of it have not survived.

Just when William Ponton ceased operating is also unknown but he had certainly finished prior to the introduction of the legislation affecting bus services that came with the Road Traffic Act of 1930.

**William Thomas Ponton's**  
Bus Service(s):  
Definite Service: Scaldwell - Brixworth  
Northampton (Bull Hotel).  
  
Possible Service: Walgrave - Holcot -  
Moulton - Northampton (Either  
The Racehorse, Abington Square  
or Campbell Square).

**FOOTNOTE:-** A Walter Ponton, aged 19 at September 1928, was driving buses for W A R Gibson of Walgrave (NN-GI5) when he had an accident. This begs the questions was Walter the same person as Samuel Walter and, if so, was he the son of William Thomas? Yet more confusion over the relationships of the players in this story, yet to be answered.

### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
						New	S/H	W/D			
BD 152	Ford	T	4681222	?	B14?	-/19	—	4/23	—	No further owner	
BD 3193	Ford	T	?	?	Bus?/ Taxi?	11/15	1/20	12/23	York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	No further owner	
BD 4819	Humber	Landau- lette	C5771	?	Taxi?	7/20	?	by 10/21	W F Hedge, Old	?	1
?	Ford	T	?	?	B14?	?	7/23	3/25?	Supp H Oliver Ltd/ Miller, Welford	?	
RP 579	Morris	?	3253	?	B14F	3/25	—		Supp Derngate Motor Co Ltd, Northampton	?	2

Notes: 1 - BD 4819 last owned by W F Heasley, Old and last licensed 10/21.

2 - RP 579 last owned by W Timms, Banbury and last licensed as a goods vehicle 9/34.