

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-GI5  
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## GIBSON. Wilfred Augustus Rowland t/a Cosy Coaches Gladstone House & later Crispin Cottage WALGRAVE

It is not known to the author how Wilfred Gibson came to commence bus services starting from Walgrave as at the time he purchased his first three buses he was residing at The Green, Hardingstone. Be that as it may, Wilfred Gibson purchased a second-hand Pierce-Arrow saloon bus with a fourteen-seater Hasker body and started a service from Walgrave to Northampton via Hannington, Holcot and Moulton on Wednesday 9th September 1925, in direct competition with the service of Leathersich Bros. At some stage the route was extended to start from Old.

Wilfred Gibson retained the Pierce-Arrow for only about eight weeks pending the delivery of a new Chevrolet R-type chassis onto which the fourteen-seat Hasker body from the Pierce-Arrow was mounted. This new machine was registered RP 1860 on 30th October 1925. Concurrently Gibson was making applications to Northampton Borough Council for Hackney Carriage licences to enable him to ply for hire from Campbell Square, Northampton and his first licence for the Pierce-Arrow was granted on 19th October 1925 with a replacement for the Chevrolet following on 16th November 1925. Incidentally, Wilfred Gibson had moved to Gladstone House, Walgrave by November 1926 at the latest.

During 1926 Wilfred Gibson purchased three more Chevrolets, two of which were new as RP 2438 and RP 3451 on 31st March and 8th November 1926 respectively. In addition a used Chevrolet registered NH 6571 was acquired, no doubt from a Northampton operator and probably seating eighteen passengers.

Wilfred Gibson's next new bus was a REO Sprinter bought from Allchin's of Northampton, who were the local REO agents, on 30th March 1927 when it was registered RP 4046. This bus was an eighteen-seater by an unknown coachbuilder. It is known that Wilfred Gibson also bought a second-hand Dodge bus which may have seated twenty passengers as he was granted a Hackney Carriage licence for this capacity in September 1928.

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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GIBSON, Wilfred A. R. - WALGRAVE



*As Wilfred Gibson's other Chevrolets seated fourteen passengers and the one illustrated alongside clearly seated more, it is assumed this bus was NH 6571. When photographed it was taking a party of Walgrave people on a private hire.*

Unfortunately on Sunday 9th September 1928 Wilfred Gibson's Chevrolet RP 1860 met with an accident from which it was not destined to recover. It is best to turn to the Northampton Independent for full details.

### Sunday Night Smash on the Kettering Road.

#### Passengers' Miraculous Escape.



*The fact that the petrol tank did not explode when this 'bus collided with a telegraph pole on the Kettering Road on Sunday night was the only fortunate aspect of an accident in which eight people were injured. An explanation of the above indications of the approximate course of the vehicles is given below. "Northampton Independent" Photo.*

GIBSON, Wilfred A. R. - WALGRAVE

As the result of an alarming accident between the bus depicted in our picture and a motor cyclist on the Kettering Road on Sunday night six people were taken to the Northampton General Hospital severely cut by the shattered glass and the eight passengers had narrow escapes from death. From accounts of the accident given by the driver, Mr. Walter Ponton (19) of Walgrave, and several of the passengers it appears that the bus was travelling in the direction of Kettering and had reached the Golf Links when the driver was forced to swerve to avoid a motor cyclist who had been travelling in the same direction and was about to turn back. As the nearside fore wheel of the bus struck the kerb the steering wheel was torn from the driver's hands and the bus crashed into a telegraph pole with a force which can be estimated from the above illustration.

Several windows in the bus were shattered and few of the passengers escaped the flying fragments. The most severely injured was Mr Charles Ratcliffe, aged 75, of Billing Arbors, who was detained in hospital with bruises and concussion.

An illustration of what is believed to have been the course of the accident is given in our photograph; A representing the course of the bus and B that of the motor cyclist. The latter, who was returning with a supply of carbide for another motorcyclist, met his companion (C) following the course which he had taken; and he appears to have been turning back immediately in front of the bus in a natural endeavour to intercept his companion when the crash occurred. The motor cyclist stated that he signalled his intention to turn and was quite unaware that the bus was behind him."

Presumably the Chevrolet's chassis was severely damaged in the accident and it was not considered an economical proposition to repair RP 1860, which saw no further service. To replace it Wilfred Gibson ordered a new fourteen-seat Chevrolet LP model which was duly delivered and registered RP 6559 on 14th November 1928. Thereafter Wilfred Gibson bought only REO chassis and in 1929 a twenty-seater REO Speed Wagon joined the fleet being registered RP 7730 on 5th July 1929.



*REOSpeed Wagon  
RP 7730 had a  
full compliment  
of passengers  
when this photo-  
graph was taken  
whilst operating  
a private hire or  
excursion. Note  
the bus is still  
carrying a side  
board reading  
"Northampton".*

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Wilfred Gibson bought his last new bus in 1930 when a REO Pullman was a chosen and this machine, registered RP 9047 on 5th June 1930, could accommodate two dozen passengers.



*Above: Again by deduction, in view of the light intrusion on the original photograph, this REO must have been RP 9047. The name "Cosy Coaches" is just visible in a display immediately above the destination aperture.*

Wilfred Gibson did acquire one other bus and this probably came in 1931 and was a second-hand REO Sprinter originally operated by Francis Belgrove of Cold Higham. It had been new in November 1927 when it was registered RP 5102 and probably seated fourteen passengers.

*Left: This photograph depicts REO Sprinter RP 5102 whilst in the ownership of Francis Belgrove of Cold Higham.*

**GIBSON. Wilfred A. R. - WALGRAVE**

Apart from the Old to Northampton service, Wilfred Gibson at some stage in the late 1920s gained a contract from Sear's Shoe Factory in Northampton to provide a mid-day workers' service to enable shoe workers to return home for lunch and back to work within the hour. Private hires and excursions provided Wilfred Gibson with the remainder of his income.

**MOULTON.**  
**The OLD ARTICHOKE INN**  
FULLY LICENCED  
PHIPPS' ALES & STOUT. GARAGE.  
TEA GARDENS. PARTIES CATERED FOR.  
PROPRIETOR - GEO. CORKR.

"Cosy" Bus Service. **MOULTON, HOLCOT, WALGRAVE & OLD** Starts from Campbell Sq.

	MON.	TUES.	WEDS.	THURS.	FRI.	
Northampton	7 30 8 10 9 10 15 12 0 21 0 3 30 4 30 5 20 5 30 5 45 7 30 8 30 9 130	11 0	...	...	...	...
Moulton	7 45 8 25 9 15 10 30 12 15 2 15 3 45 4 45 5 35 5 45 6 0 7 45 8 45 9 145	11 15	...	...	...	...
Holcot	7 55 8 35 9 25 10 40 12 25 2 25 3 55 4 55 5 45 5 55 6 10 7 55 8 55 9 155	11 25	...	...	...	...
Hannington	8 40	9 10	...	...	...	...
Walgrave	8 0 8 45 9 30 10 45 12 30 2 30 4 0 5 0 5 50 6 5 6 15 8 0 9 1 5 10 10	11 30	...	...	...	...
Old	8 5 8 50 9 35 10 50 12 35 2 35 4 5 5 55 6 10 6 20 8 5 9 10 10 15	11 35	...	...	...	...
Old	6 45 8 10 9 0 9 45 11 0 1 30 2 15 4 10 6 30	7 15	7 30 8 130	...	...	...
Walgrave	6 50 8 15 9 5 9 50 11 5 1 35 2 50 4 15 5 0 6 35	7 20	7 35 8 135	...	...	...
Hannington	6 55	9 10	...	...	...	...
Holcot	7 0 8 20 9 15 9 55 11 15 1 40 2 55 4 25 5 6 8 45	7 25	7 40 8 145	...	...	...
Moulton	7 10 8 30 9 25 9 5 11 25 1 50 3 10 4 35 5 15 6 55	7 35	7 50 8 155	...	...	...
Northampton	7 25 8 45 9 40 10 120 11 40 2 5 3 25 4 50 5 30 7 10	7 50 8 1 9 11 10	...	...	...	...

SATURDAYS	
Northampton	7 30 9 0 10 15 12 0 12 30 2 0
Moulton	7 45 9 15 10 30 12 15 12 45 2 15
Holcot	7 55 9 25 10 40 12 25 12 55 2 25
Hannington	8 40
Walgrave	8 0 9 30 10 45 12 35 1 0 2 35
Old	8 5 9 35 10 50 12 40 1 5 2 40
Old	6 45 8 10 9 0 9 45 11 0 1 15 1 0 1 30 2 45 4 10 5 40 6 30 7 30 8 45 9 45 10 20
Walgrave	6 55 8 15 9 5 9 50 11 5 1 55 1 5 1 35 2 50 4 15 5 45 6 35 7 35 8 50 9 50 10 25
Hannington	6 55
Holcot	7 0 8 20 9 15 9 55 11 15 1 15 1 40 3 0 4 25 5 50 6 45 7 40 8 55 10 0 10 30
Moulton	7 10 8 30 9 25 10 5 11 25 1 25 1 50 3 10 4 35 5 6 6 55 7 50 9 5 10 10 10 40
Northampton	7 25 8 45 9 40 10 20 11 40 2 1 40 2 5 3 25 4 50 6 15 7 10 8 5 9 20 10 25 10 55

SUNDAYS	
N'pton	11 0 2 0 330 515 630 8 0 845 9 40 10 0
Moulton	11 15 215 345 530 645 815 9 0 9 55 10 15
Holcot	11 25 225 355 540 655 825 9 10 5 10 25
Hann'g'n	230
Walgrave	11 30 235 4 0 550 7 0 835 9 15 10 15 10 30
Old	11 35 240 4 5 555 7 5 840 9 20 10 20 10 35
Old	10 10 11 15 215 430 530 715 8 0 845 9 20
Walgrave	10 15 120 250 435 535 720 8 5 850 9 25
Hann'g'n	255
Holcot	10 20 125 3 0 440 545 730 810 9 0 930
Moul't'n	10 30 135 310 450 555 740 820 910 940
N'pton	10 45 150 325 5 5 610 755 835 925 955

PHONE MOULTON 30  
CALL AT THE  
**WHITE LION**  
MOULTON.  
R.A.O.B. TUESDAY NIGHTS  
Prop. FRED WILSON.  
Buses Stop at Door.

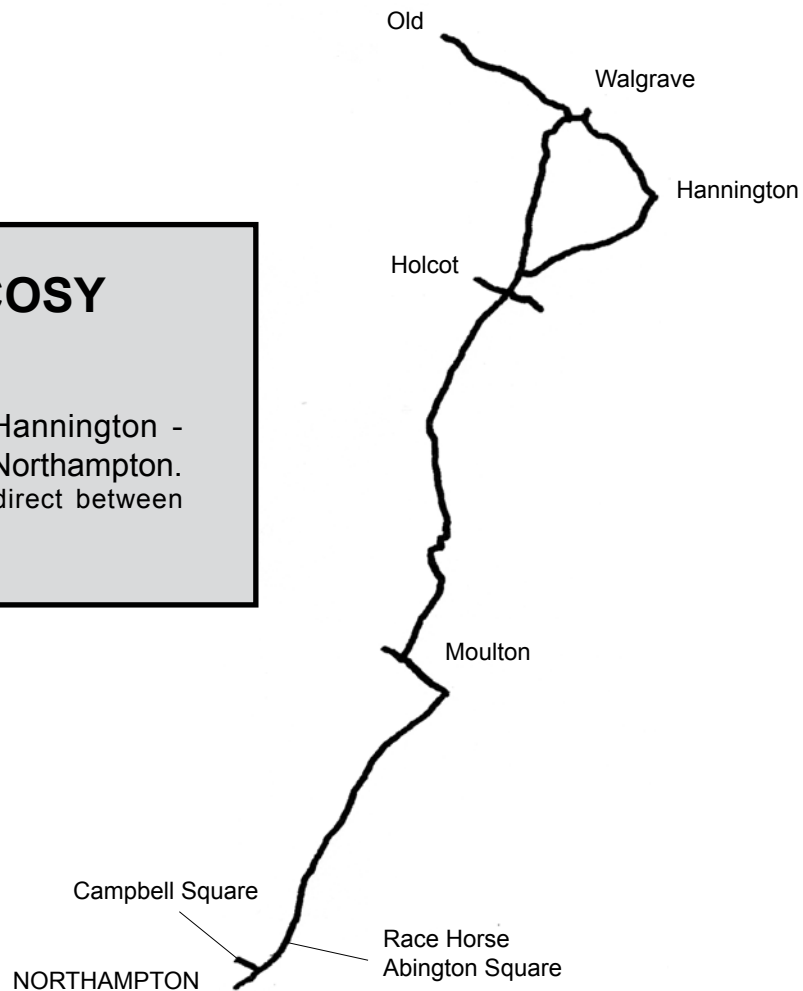
Ring up **1859**  
FOR  
**PRINTING**  
Keen Prices—Prompt Delivery  
**THE VICTORY PRESS**

A facsimile of Wilfred Gibson's "Cosy" bus service timetable, plying between Old and Northampton and taken from a 1931 "Enterprise" booklet.

### GIBSON. Wilfred A. R. - WALGRAVE

#### GIBSON'S COSY COACHES

Old - Walgrave - Hannington -  
Holcot - Moulton - Northampton.  
(Some journeys ran direct between  
Walgrave and Holcot).



Commencing on Saturday 7th June 1930 Wilfred Gibson inaugurated a weekend coach service from Northampton to Blackpool via Leicester, Derby, Ashbourne, Leek, Macclesfield, Warrington, Wigan and Preston, using his REO Pullman coach RP 9047. The service departed from Northampton at 7.00am and returned from Blackpool at 3.00pm. The route presumably met with some initial success as from 18th July it was extended to run every Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. Despite this early promise it is assumed the route could not sustain its current operation as Wilfred Gibson made no attempt to seek a Northampton - Blackpool licence for the 1931 season.

The advent of the Road Traffic Act 1930 necessitated Wilfred Gibson applying for Road Service licences for the operations he had undertaken within the previous twelve months. Accordingly, in the second half of 1931, applications were submitted for the Old to Northampton and Sear's Factory mid-day workers' stage-carriage routes and for a group of excursions starting from Gibson's Walgrave garage. These fifteen tours included Clacton, Hunstanton, Skegness, Yarmouth and London plus various more local destinations. All were granted late in 1931 and in due course took the Commissioner's reference numbers TER269/1, TER269/3 and TER269/2 respectively. Various new

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## NORTHAMPTON AND BLACKPOOL

### "COSY" MOTOR COACHES.

COMMENCING SATURDAY, JUNE 7th, and EVERY SATURDAY and SUNDAY FOLLOWING, our NEW LONG-DISTANCE COACHES WILL LEAVE

#### NORTHAMPTON FOR BLACKPOOL, at 7-0 a.m.

Via Leicester, Loughborough, Derby, Ashbourne, Leek, Macclesfield, Knutsford, Warrington, Wigan and Preston.

Fares: NORTHAMPTON to BLACKPOOL..... 14s. 0d. Single.  
25s. 0d. Return.

Fares to Intermediate Towns on application to Agents.

#### SPECIAL WHITSUN SERVICES.

##### BLACKPOOL

Week-end Trips to above, up Saturday or Sunday, return Tuesday, leave 3.0 p.m.

##### BRIGHTON

Day Trip to Brighton Whit-Monday, leave Northampton 6.0 a.m. Fare 12s. 6d.

##### ASCOT.

Now Booking for Above Races

ENQUIRIES and BOOKINGS at ..... Head Office, Dechurch Lane, Phone 1516  
COLLINS, 5, Regent Square, Phone 2022  
BATES, 3, Bridge Street, Phone 1811

Proprietor, W. GIBSON.

*A facsimile of Gibson's advertisement for the Northampton to Blackpool venture taken from Northampton Daily Chronicle of 5th June 1930.*

excursions were added to Gibson's licence during 1932, the only one of note being Whipsnade Zoo.

It appears that although Wilfred Gibson and the Leathersich brothers provided similar facilities there was little animosity between them and they each had their own loyal clientele. By 1932 United Counties saw that the Old to Northampton services of both Gibson and Leathersich Bros would fit nicely into their own network of routes as the Company was running from Old via Walgrave to Kettering, Old via Brixworth to Northampton and from Moulton to Northampton. The villages of Hannington, Holcot and Walgrave (as far as Northampton was concerned) were not part of United Counties' current operating territory. It was not surprising therefore that within the new conditions created by the regulation of the 1930 Act that United Counties should reach agreement with both Wilfred Gibson and Leathersich Bros to acquire the Goodwill of their businesses.

In the case of Wilfred Gibson, who by this time was residing at Crispin Cottage, Walgrave, an Agreement was signed on 25th November 1932 whereby United Counties would purchase the Goodwill of Gibson's licences for the sum of £1550. No vehicles or

#### GIBSON. Wilfred A. R. - WALGRAVE

property were included in the sale. Gibson ran a more intensive service between Old and Northampton than did Leathersich Bros and this was reflected in the higher price United Counties paid for Gibson's business. United Counties duly applied to the Traffic Commissioners for new or modified services to take account of Gibson's and Leathersich's services and was granted short-period licences to do so with effect from 1st January 1933.

The agreement with Wilfred Gibson did not prevent him from continuing to operate private hires with the vehicles he retained but he found that without his local Northampton service and excursions the public were unaware that he had vehicles for hire and he was soon obliged to cease operating completely, probably in the Autumn of 1933.

*I am grateful to the late Wilfred Gibson for recollections of his bus operating days.*

#### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
?	Pierce-Arrow		?	Hasker	B14F		?	9/25	10/25			1
RP 1860	Chevrolet	R	6116	Hasker	B14F		10/25	—	9/28	—	No further owner	1
RP 2438	Chevrolet	R	7133T		B14		3/26	—	?	Supp by Anstey, Northampton		2
RP 3451	Chevrolet	X	11107		B14		11/26	—	?			3
NH 6571	Chevrolet		?		B18F?		9/25	c-/26?	4/30	?	No further owner	4
RP 4046	REO	Sprinter	145271		B18		3/27	—	c2/33	Supplied by Allchin, Northampton	C E Charles, M'ton Cheney	5
?	Dodge		?		B20F?		?	by 9/28?	?	?	?	6
RP 6559	Chevrolet	LP	46126		B14		11/28	—	6/30?	—	R A Robertson, Strathglass	7
RP 7730	REO	Speed Wagon	FAX 11209		B20F		7/29	—	c-/33	—	City of Peterboro'	8
RP 9047	REO	Pullman	GB174		B24F		6/30	—	c2/33	—	Mobile Canteen	8
RP 5102	REO	Sprinter	147601		B14F?		11/27	c-/31	9/32	F Belgrove, Cold Higham	No further owner	

**Notes:** 1 - Hasker body from Pierce-Arrow transferred to RP 1860. 2 - NH 6571 last licensed to Gibson 11/35.  
 3 - RP 2438 last licensed as a goods vehicle to F L Bailey, Turvey 3/36. 5 - RP 4046 last licensed to Charles 9/35.  
 4 - RP 3451 last licensed as a goods vehicle to W Harris, Northampton 3/34.  
 6 - No details of Dodge are known. 7 - RP 6559 last licensed to Robertson 3/32.  
 8 - RP 7730 last licensed to City of Peterborough 12/44. 9 - RP 9047 last licensed to Knight 6/39.