

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-TI2

Page 1

TIMSON. Lewis & Charles Harold t/a L Timson & Son 96 Finedon Street BURTON LATIMER

Precious little is known of Lewis Timson who was born in 1867 or 1868, or his son Charles Harold prior to 1921. Whether or not they were natives of Northamptonshire has not been established, nor their professions prior to and during the First World War. They first come to light in March 1921 when Harold Timson advertised in the Kettering Evening Telegraph that he had a fourteen-seater charabanc for hire. It was claimed that this machine was the acme of comfort in travelling and was fitted with pneumatic tyres. Nothing further is known of this vehicle but at the same time Lewis Timson purchased an eight-seater Ford T registered BD 5796, which it is assumed was used as a private hire car. Concurrently with these vehicle acquisitions Harold Timson applied to both Wellingborough Urban District Council and Northampton County Borough Council for Hackney Carriage licences. In the case of Wellingborough an appropriate document was granted for one bus seating fourteen passengers, whilst in Northampton the application was refused.

The 14-seater bus was retained for three years after which time it was replaced with a twenty-seat REO F Speed Bus which took to the road on 27th February 1924 with the registration number BD 8873 and adorned in a blue and red livery. All the buses in Timsons' future fleet were painted blue and white.

It may be recalled that the first bus bought in 1921 was purchased by Harold Timson so it is not clear whether he was trading independently at that time or in partnership with his father, Lewis. However, by the time the first REO was acquired, the business was trading as L Timson & Son.

Evidently the Timsons were well pleased with their REO as a testimonial from Harold Timson dated 20th February 1925 was used by Messrs Harris & Hasell Ltd of Bristol, the importers of REO chassis, in an advertisement placed in "Motor Transport" of 29th June 1925. This is reproduced on the following page and the text of the commendation follows on page 3.

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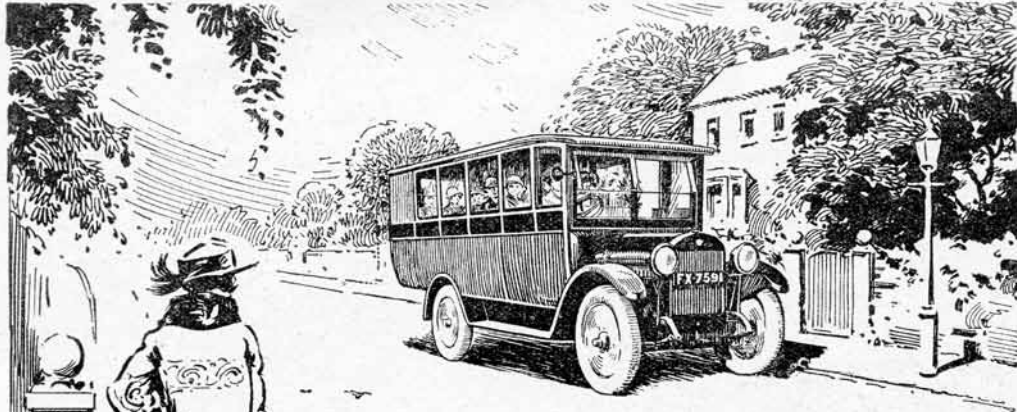
Page 2

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER

MOTOR TRANSPORT.

ADVERTISEMENTS.—(SUPPLEMENT XXI.)

JUNE 29TH, 1925. 21



The REO SPEED BUS

Messrs. Harris & Hasell, Ltd.,

BURTON LATIMER, Nr. Kettering.
Feb. 20th, 1925.

Dear Sirs,
Our Reo (Chassis No. 99290) has been out every day for 12 months without having experienced any involuntary stops or any trouble in any way. It has completed 25,000 miles, the only attention it required being oiled and greased and the cleaning and grinding of the exhaust valves three times. No repairs have been executed and only six tyres have been used. All these are still serviceable: two have completed the 25,000 miles, never having been taken off the car, and it has far exceeded our expectations and we hope to have another on the road by Easter. Perhaps you would like to know what we consider to be the running cost per mile of this bus.

	PENCE.	actually	14 per gall.
Petrol 12 m.p. gall. at 1/3 per gall.	1.25	..	tyres still in use.
6 tyres at list price for 25,000 miles	.6	..	850 per gall.
Oils and greases, 500 miles per gall. at 5/-	.12	..	nil.
Depreciation, £78 per year	.75	..	£24 & £26-£50
Repairs, £26 for 25,000 miles	.25	..	
Tax and Insurance, £60	.60	..	
	3.57d.	..	

Running cost per mile, less wages

We find we can run this Reo, actually 2d. per mile cheaper than we ran a for 3 years.
Perhaps the depreciation allowance seems a trifle on the small side, but we consider a Reo good for 5 years' hard work, and we appreciate the good service system which the agents back their sales with.
Wishing you every success in your business.

We are, Yours truly,
L. TIMSON & SON.
(Signed) C. H. TIMSON.



REO Speed Bus

£495

at Bristol.

Mounted on Reo Model "F" Chassis with 27.2 H.P. engine, electric starter, lighting, horn, speedometer, five 33" x 5" cord tyres, full tool kit, etc.

Write for REO folders.

Proof positive of REO great economy.

SOLE CONCESSIONAIRES—

HARRIS & HASELL, LTD

24-32 ST. GEORGES RD. BRISTOL
London Offices and Showrooms
130 GT. PORTLAND STREET W.I.

London—Phone: Museum 4333.

Grams: "Reospeeda, Wesdo, London."

Bristol—Phone: 6400.

Grams: "Ribbed, Bristol."

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER

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We have had every satisfaction from this bus, and it has far exceeded our expectations and we hope to have another on the road by Easter. Perhaps you would like to know what we consider to be the running cost per mile of this bus.

	PENCE
Petrol; 12 m.p. gall. at 1/3 per gall.	1.25 actually 14 per gall.
6 tyres at list price for 25,000 miles	.6 actually tyres still in use.
Oils and grease, 500 miles per gall. at 5/-	.12 actually 850 per gall.
Depreciation, £78 per year	.75
Repairs, £26 for 25,000 miles	.25 actually nil.
Tax and Insurance, £60	<u>.6</u> actually £24 & £26-£50
Running cost per mile, less wages	<u>3.57d.</u>

We find we can run this Reo actually 2d per mile cheaper than we ran a for 3 years.

Perhaps the depreciation allowance seems a trifle on the small side, but we consider a Reo good for 5 years' hard work, and we appreciate the good service system which the agents back their sales with.

Wishing you every success in your business.

We are, Yours truly,

L. TIMSON & SON.

(Signed) C. H. TIMSON

Harold Timson refers to his expectation of having another REO on the road by Easter 1925 and Speedwagon RP 734 with twenty-seat Bracebridge bodywork duly joined the Timson fleet on 28th March 1925. It was supplied by dealer G H Skinner of Spalding and motor tax records reveal that it was fitted with a Buick engine. RP 734 was additional to the fleet.

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-TI2

Page 4

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER



Fortunately an illustration of REO Speedwagon RP 734 is available, photographed when new by the Bracebridge coachbuilders. The garter on the side of the vehicle contains the words "Burton & Kettering". (Photo courtesy Roy Marshall collection).

It is not known precisely when Lewis Timson & Son commenced operating local bus services but it seems likely that RP 734 was bought especially for that purpose.

Timsons' operated between Burton Latimer and Kettering via Polewell Lane and Barton Seagrave and at a later date ran a second service from Kettering via Barton Seagrave, A6 main road and Burton Latimer to Finedon.

Timson's.

KETTERING & BURTON LATIMER.

Mons., Tues., Weds. and Thurs. Leave **KETTERING** 7.5, 720, 8.0, 915, 10.0, 11.5 a.m., 1240, 1*50, 225, 255, 3*30, 410, 445, 510, 525, 540, 5*55, 615, 6*45, 715, 745, 815, 8*45, 910, 945, 1021, 10*55 p.m.

Leave **BURTON** 645, 7.5, 740, 840, 9*35, 1045 a.m., 1220, 135, 1*50, 220, 310, 343, 4*25, 445, 5*0, 525, 535, 5*50, 6*20, 650, 720, 750, 8*20, 850, 935, 10.0, 1040 p.m.

Fridays. Leave **KETTERING** 7.5, 720, 8.0, 915, 10.0, 1030, 11.5, 1145 a.m., 1240, 1*30, 1*50, 215, 250, 3*20, 3*50, 410, 445, 510, 525, 540, 5*55, 615, 6*45, 715, 7*45, 815, 8*45, 910, 9*45, 1021, 10*55 p.m.

Leave **BURTON** 645, 7.5, 740, 840, 9*35, 1015, 10*45, 11*25 a.m., 1220, 1*10, 135, 1*50, 2*20, 2*45, 3*15, 3*45, 4*25, 440, 5*5, 525, 5*30, 5*50, 6*20, 650, 7*20, 750, 820, 850, 9*25, 10.0, 1040 p.m.

Saturdays. Leave **KETTERING** 7.5, 720, 8.0, 9*10, 10*0, 11.3, 1153 a.m., 1215, 1230, 1245, 2.3, 2*23, 243, 3*3, 323, 3*43, 4.3, 4*23, 443, 5*3, 523, 5*43, 6.3, 6*23, 643, 7*3, 723, 7*43, 8.3, 8*23, 843, 9*3, 923, 9*43, 10.3, 10*23, 1043, 11*10 p.m.

Leave **BURTON** 645, 7.5, 740, 840, 9*35, 10*45, 11*25, 1155 a.m., 1210, 1230, 1.45, 2*5, 225, 2*45, 3.5, 3*25, 345, 4*5, 425, 4*45, 5.5, 5*25, 545, 6*5, 625, 6*45, 7.0, 7*25, 745, 8*5, 825, 9*45, 9.5, 9*25, 945, 10*5, 1025, 10*45 p.m.

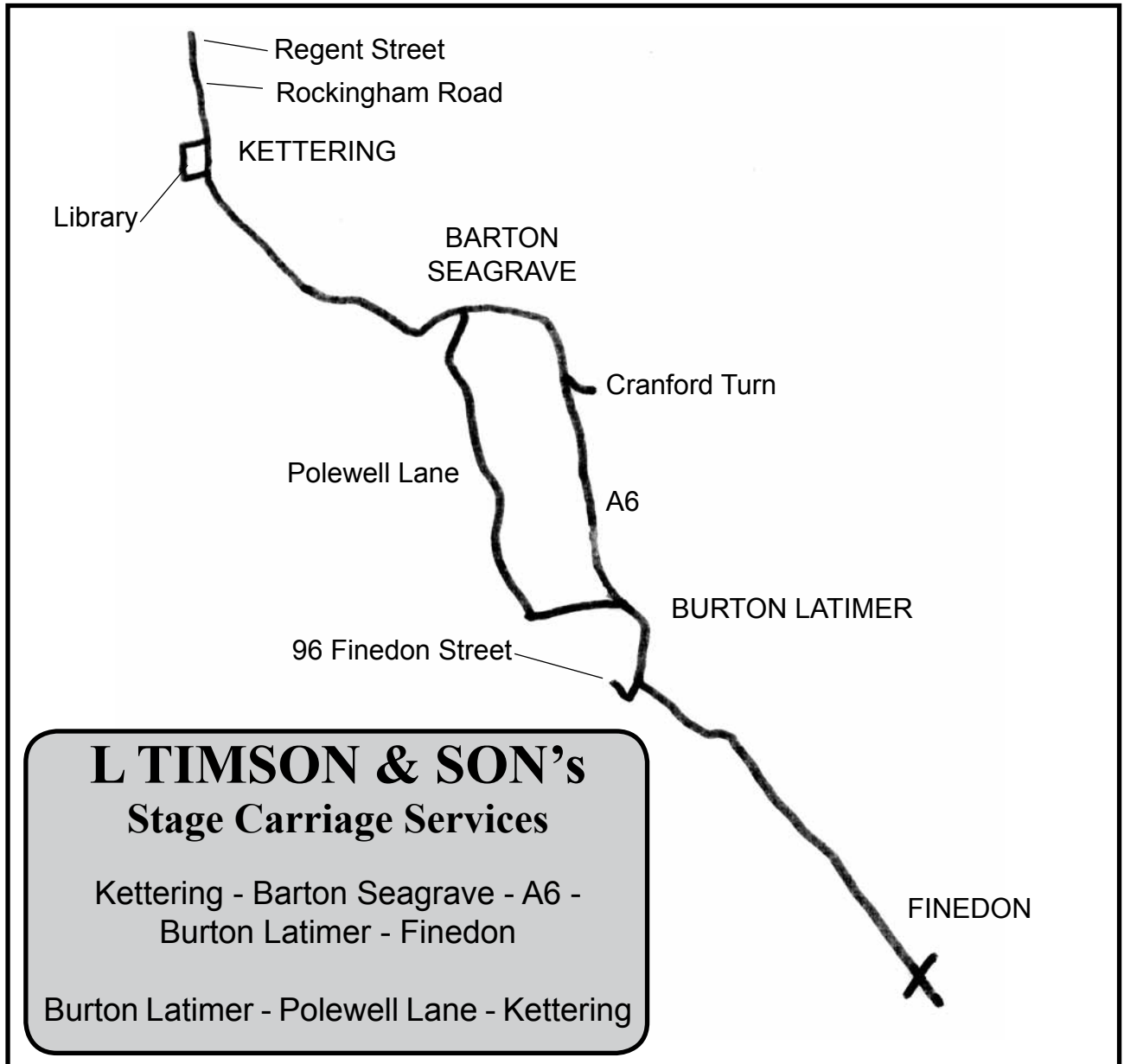
Sundays. Leave **KETTERING** 1030 a.m., 1215, 2*0, 2*23, 240, 3*0, 323, 3*40, 536, 5*56, 616, 6*36, 656, 7*16, 736, 7*56, 816, 8*36, 856, 9*16, 936, 9*56, 1016, 10*36, 1056 p.m.

Leave **BURTON** 10.0, 1155 a.m., 1*45, 2.2, 2*22, 245, 3*2, 322, 3*45, 518, 5*38, 553, 6*18, 638, 6*58, 715, 7*38, 758, 8*18, 838, 8*58, 918, 9*38, 958, 10*18 p.m.

* Via Polewell Lane.

The earliest timetable available for Timson's Kettering to Burton service is this extract from Thompson's Kettering Rail & Bus Guide of September 1929

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER



It seems likely that Lewis and Harold Timson decided to trade in their first REO saloon for a new bus in February 1928. This time the Timsons shopped with Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton and opted for a G.M.C. Unfortunately the model and seating capacity of the vehicle purchased are not known but in all probability it seated twenty passengers in a body built by Grose Ltd themselves. This G.M.C. was allocated the registration RP 5383 and was first licensed on 8th February 1928.

In the following year, 1929, the Timsons became a little more adventurous when they took delivery of a thirty-two seater Gilford 166OT chassis onto which was mounted a Duple body. Luckily this machine, registered RP 7822, arrived at Burton Latimer in time to be licensed on 24th July 1929, just ahead of the main holiday and excursion period.

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER



In January 1936 Harold Timson was driving this Gilford 166OT, which is likely to have been RP 7822, and in an attempt to avoid a head-on collision with a car at the junction of Station Road/Polewell Lane, Burton Latimer, crashed through the railings shown in this picture. None of the fifteen passengers on board were injured.

(Photo courtesy Evening Telegraph)

The rolling stock of Messrs L Timson & Son was generally equipped with bus rather than coach seating although seaside trips were frequently operated. At the end of 1930 the REO Speedwagon RP 734 was due for replacement and for this purpose a second-hand coach was chosen. An unusual Vickers bodied DeDion was sourced which came from the Trent Motor Traction Company of Derby, registered RA 5539, and acquired by them from an independent operator taken over. Sadly this machine cannot be illustrated.

Returning to the subject of local bus services, it has already been mentioned that the Timsons operated between Kettering, Burton Latimer and Finedon. Another Kettering operator covering a similar route was Charles White (NN-WH2) and in September 1927 the Kettering Council was recommending that Timson and White co-ordinate their timetables. This they did and over the next few years additional timings were granted by the Council to both operators until in November 1930 Harold Timson requested the amalgamated timetable be cancelled. Mr White was not agreeable and it was left to the Council's Inspector to reach agreement on the allocation of times with the two operators. Shortly after this the requirements of the Road Traffic Act, 1930 came into force on 1st April 1931.

■ L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER ■

For L Timson & Son this meant that towards the end of 1931 the firm applied for two Stage Carriage Service Licences, two Excursions & Tours Licences and one Express Service Licence. The two Stage Carriage services were Kettering - Barton Seagrave - A6 - Burton Latimer - Finedon and Burton Latimer - Polewell Lane - Barton Seagrave - Kettering which in due course took the Traffic Commissioners' references TER 357/2 and TER 357/3. The Excursion Licences were for two groups of tours, one starting from Kettering, Rockingham Road and the other from Burton Latimer, The Cross. The Commissioners allocated the references TER 357/5 and TER 357/4 to these. The Express Service was a football special running on Northampton Town F C match days from Burton Latimer, picking up at Finedon and on to the County Ground in Northampton. The licence for this route became TER 357/1. With the exception of the application by Timsons to the Traffic Commissioners for additional excursions and the extension of the Burton Latimer to Kettering service to Regent Street in the latter town on Sundays and Holidays, the above five licences remained intact and little altered for the rest of the time L Timson & Son were in business.

For the 1932 Summer Season one second-hand coach and one new coach were taken into stock. The used machine was first on the scene in April and was another Gilford, but this time a normal-control 168SD model. Registered UV 4508 it had previously been in the service of Phillipson of Blaydon and seated twenty-five passengers. Two months later, in June 1932, a twenty-seat Duple bodied Morris Director was purchased new and registered NV 1413 on 1st June having been supplied by the Dergate Motor Company of Northampton which was a Morris agent. At the end of September the G.M.C. registered RP 5383 was taken out of service.



UV 4508, a Gilford 168SD was a handsome coach which provided L Timson & Son with two year's service before being sold for further coaching activity.

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-TI2

Page 8

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER

Lewis and Harold Timson liked Gilford coaches and added a third to their fleet, possibly in 1933, but the exact date is not known. The vehicle in question was another forward-control model 166OT registered TR 8061 and acquired second-hand from Modern Travel of Southampton.

Moving on to 1934 it seems that at least the Gilford UV 4508 and the Morris Director NV 1413 and possibly the DeDion RA 5539 were all taken out of the fleet and replaced by a used REO Pullman and two new Commer Centaurs. The REO Pullman came from W & C Smith of Syston registered UT 4676 and seated twenty passengers in a body of unknown manufacture. The two Commer Centaurs were both supplied and bodied by Messrs Willmotts of Hammersmith, seating twenty passengers. The first was registered NV 3576 on 21st July 1934 and the second became NV 4404 on delivery in September.



The best that can be done to illustrate REO Pullman UT 4676 is this newspaper photograph taken in March 1935 after the bus had collided with a United Counties double-decker on the railway bridge between Kettering and Burton Latimer, in thick fog. As one would expect there were many injured by flying glass and debris. It seems that both vehicles were repaired for further service. (Photo courtesy Evening Telegraph).

A tantalising glimpse of Commer Centaur NV 3576 can be seen on the extreme right of the illustration on page 6 of this paper. Clearly the Timsons had sent out staff in the Commer to inspect the damage caused to the Gilford following its accident.

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER



Not a good picture but it serves to show Commer Centaur NV 4404 emerging from Rushden Garage after acquisition by United Counties.

In the Autumn of 1935 negotiations took place between L Timson & Son and United Counties Omnibus Co Ltd with a view to the latter acquiring Timsons' business. In fact an agreement was signed as early as 25th November 1935 and provided for United Counties to seek the approval of the Traffic Commissioners to take over Timsons' five Road Service Licences; to acquire one REO, two Gilfords and two Commers; and to acquire spare parts and equipment relating to these vehicles in exchange for a consideration of £8,000.

United Counties did not apply to the Traffic Commissioners until late January or early February 1936 to incorporate Timsons' operations within its own schedules and finally commenced the revised operations on Sunday 8th March 1936. The long delay between the November 1935 Agreement and completion of the deal in March 1936 was unusual but the Company's road-staff strike of January 1936 was probably instrumental in causing the delay.

At the time of the sale of his business, Lewis Timson would have been in his late sixties. He survived another eight years before dying in April 1944 at the age of 76 years. The subsequent history of Harold Timson is not known.

L Timson & Son, BURTON LATIMER

Rolling Stock:

REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
	MAKE	TYPE	NO.	MAKE	TYPE/ SEATS	NO.	NEW	S/H	W/D			
BD 5796	Ford	T	4521851	Ford	8	—	3/21	—	?			1
?	?	?	?	?	B14	—	3/21		c2/24		T Wesley, S Goldington C E Billington, Northampton	
BD 8873	REO	F	99290	?	B20	—	2/24	—	c-/28?	—	No further owner	2
RP 734	REO	Speed-wagon	115159	Brace-bridge Grose?	B20D	—	3/25	—	12/30	—	United Counties 431	
RP 5383	G.M.C.	?	205670		B	—	2/28	—	9/32	—	No further owner	
RP 7822	Gilford	166OT	10924	Duple	B32F	1616	7/29	—	3/36	—	United Counties 431	
RA 5539	DeDion	?	?	Vickers	B20	?	4/28	12/30	by- /36	Trent 1360	No further owner	
UV 4508	Gilford	168SD	10802	?	C25F	?	7/29	4/32	8/34	Phillipson, Blaydon	Kearsey, Chelt'ham	
NV 1413	Morris	Director	083	Duple	C20	2911	6/32	—	-/34?	—	?	3
TR 8061	Gilford	166OT	11120	?	C30	?	1/30	c-/33?	3/36	Modern Travel, Southampton	United Counties 431	
UT 4676	REO	Pullman	GE32	?	B20F	?	3/29	6/34	3/36	W & C Smith, Syston	United Counties 435	
NV 3576	Commer	Centaur	46258	Willmotts	B20F	?	7/34	—	3/36	—	United Counties 433	4
NV 4404	Commer	Centaur	46299	Willmotts	B20F	?	9/34	—	3/36	—	United Counties 434	5

- Notes: 1 - BD 5796 last licensed 12/30.
 2 - RP 734 fitted with a Buick engine. Supplied by G H Skinner, Spalding.
 3 - NV 1413 last owner by J Sharpe, Hecklington and last licensed 12/35.
 4 - NV 3576 supplied by Willmotts Motors Ltd., Hammersmith, W6. Last owned by R Jagers, Plaistow and Last licensed 12/48.
 5 - NV 4404 supplied by Willmotts Motors Ltd., Hammersmith, W6. Last owned by J Ellis (Showman), Bradford and last licensed 6/50.