

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-YO1

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YORK. Annie Jane & Alfred 173 Wollaston Road, IRCHESTER

It is understood that Alfred York was born in May 1879 and after leaving school worked for a time as a shepherd. In due course he married Annie Jane Line and the couple had seven children - four sons and three daughters. Arthur, the eldest son, was killed during the first World War and the youngest twin daughters died in infancy.

How Alfred York came to operate buses is not entirely clear but he certainly did some carrying work prior to 1920 using a horse and covered cart and no doubt progressed to motorised passenger vehicles as the years passed. Be that as it may, Annie York was the one with a little money and it seems she financed the bus operating venture. It is reputed that Annie was a very determined lady who organised her husband and children to keep the business moving forward. The first vehicle in the fleet was a model T Ford registered BD 5291, acquired early in 1921. It was described as a dual-purpose vehicle, which could be used as a lorry or a bus, but in its latter form it seated fourteen passengers with entrance being gained from the rear. It carried the name "INVINCIBLE" on its sides. Alfred York pioneered a service from Irchester to Wellingborough using this vehicle and charging 3d (1.25p) each way. Whilst United Counties operated between Wellingborough and Rushden at this time, its route ran via Chester House and not via Irchester. In January 1924 Alfred York bought a second model T Ford from Messrs. York, Ward & Rowlatt of Wellingborough. This vehicle, too, was a dual-purpose model to which seats could be fitted when in use in its passenger carrying mode. It is known that Alfred York carried wood and general merchandise and it can be assumed that he ran this business concurrently with his passenger carrying operations. The second Ford T was named "SURPRISE", was registered BD 8720 and, like its stable mate, could accommodate fourteen passengers.

Annie and Alfred York had a garage built at 173 Wollaston Road, Irchester and later erected a bungalow behind it. Because the garage was in situ first, the bungalow was built further back and the opposite way round to the other nearby dwellings and it remains the same today.

Evidently the local service to Wellingborough and private hire commitments paid sufficiently well for Alfred York to buy another new bus in August 1924. This time a

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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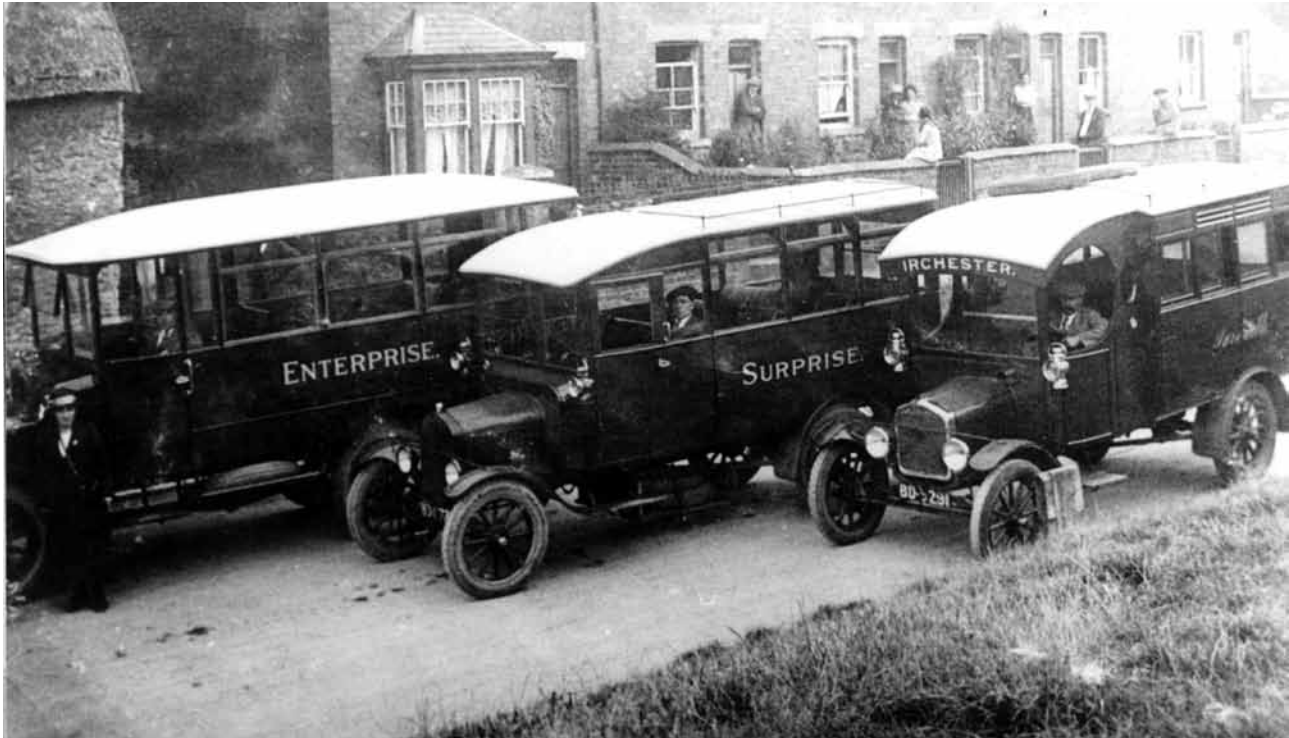
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slightly larger Maxwell chassis was chosen and it was supplied by Messrs. E Ward of Wellingborough and fitted with a body seating eighteen passengers, being registered BD 9955. The name "ENTERPRISE" was emblazoned in large letters on the sides of the Maxwell.



Annie and Alfred York named each of their buses. From left to right in this picture taken at Farndish Road, Irchester are BD 9955 - the Maxwell named "Enterprise"; BD 8720 - the Ford T named "Surprise" and BD 5291 - the Ford T named "Invincible". The livery of the vehicles was green and white.

Alfred York's surviving children, Thomas, William, Frederick and Daisy all assisted with the family business in various ways. Thomas drove for his father for a number of years until a dispute regarding the amount Alfred was prepared to pay Thomas for his driving duties led Tom to seek employment as a driver with United Counties. William and Frederick continued driving for a time but first Frederick and later William left the family concern.

Annie York must have been quite a live wire, for the story has survived that she went down to London to the Commercial Motor Show at Olympia "and had a ticket put on one of the chassis and had it sent down to Irchester". Undoubtedly there is some truth in this story and in February 1926 Messrs. York, Ward & Rowlatt supplied a brand new Thornycroft A1 to Mrs. York, complete with one of their own twenty-seat bus bodies. This saloon was registered RP 2138 and it probably replaced the original Ford T registered BD 5291. It is understood that this vehicle was named "ENERGISE".

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The single deck on the right of this picture taken in Market Street, Wellingborough, was RP 2138, Alfred York's Thornycroft A1 with typical York, Ward & Rowlatt bodywork.



A little more of the detail of Alfred York's Thornycroft A1 registered RP 2138 can be seen in this snap-shot. William York is the driver.

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As the 1920s progressed, the competition from United Counties became more intense. It is suggested that the larger Company placed buses in front and behind York's timings to increase the financial pressure on the smaller firm to sell its business. On 12th July 1928 agreements were signed to assign the business of Annie Jane and Alfred York to United Counties Omnibus & Road Transport Co. Ltd. in exchange for £500. Of this sum, £490 represented the valuation of the Thornycroft RP 2138, which duly passed to United Counties as its number 126, remaining in service until 1931. The goodwill of Annie and Alfred York's business was calculated as just £10, which suggests that by 1928 the financial viability of the services was poor. A restrictive covenant was entered into by the York's which prevented them from operating on any route covered by United Counties for a period of ten years.

After selling to United Counties, Alfred York retained the Maxwell (BD 9955) and Ford T (BD 8720) and it is understood the wood and carrying business was continued into the 1930s. In due course Alfred York went to work at the local Ironstone Company at Irchester, where he remained until he retired.

The Author is grateful to Mrs. Kathlene deMonti, daughter of William York and her son Michael deMonti for the supply of photographs and information relating to Annie and Alfred York's bus operating business.

Rolling Stock:

REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			SUPPLIED BY	INITIAL DISPOSAL
	MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE/ SEATS	NO.	NEW	S/H	W/D		
BD 5291	Ford	T	4116405	?	B14R	-	1/21	-	c2/26?		
BD 8720	Ford	T	7948008	?	B14F	-	1/24	-	7/28	York, Ward & Rowlatt, W'boro.	
BD 9955	Maxwell			?	B18F	-	8/24	-	7/28	E Ward, Wellingborough	
RP 2138	Thornycroft	A1	12403	Y.W&R	B20F	-	2/26	-	7/28	York, Ward & Rowlatt, W'boro.	U Counties O&RT C Ltd*

Notes: BD 5291 last owned by F H Rogers, Biggleswade and last licensed 6/34.
 BD 8720 last owned by Charles Boden, Wellingborough and last licensed 12/35.
 BD 9955 last owned by G E Veasey, Gt.Gidding and last licensed 3/29.
 * - RP 2138 passed from United Counties to York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough who converted it into a lorry for Paragreen & Mitchell, Irthingborough.

The buses were named:
 BD 5291 - Invincible
 BD 8720 - Surprise
 BD 9955 - Enterprise
 RP 2138 - Energise