



ADAMS. Alfred & Sons T/A BLUEBIRD Middleton Hill, MIDDLETON

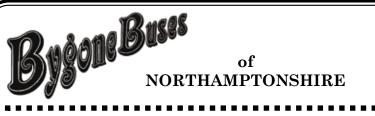
Alfred Adams was born in 1867 and spent his early days in the Towcester area of Northamptonshire, but at a later date moved to Leicestershire where he gained employment as a Stud Groom at Stapleford Park near Melton Mowbray. He later married Mary May and in due course Alfred and Mary had three children – two sons, who feature in this story – and a daughter. The eldest son, Reginald Adams, was born in June 1895; William Eric Adams was born in May 1897 and daughter Hilda Adams was born in 1901.

By 1912 Alfred Adams decided he had had enough of being a Stud Groom and made a clean break by taking over the Woolpack Inn at Middleton. The previous owner of this public house had been operating a wagonette which Alfred Adams inherited with the Woolpack Inn. By this time the wagonette was in an extremely poor state of repair, so much so, that when Alfred sent his son Eric to pick up the Rector of Cottingham, to take him to Stoke Albany, the Rector refused to travel in the contraption and sent Eric back home with his conveyance. This event soon led Alfred Adams to purchase a DeDion saloon car which he licensed as a Hackney Carriage for hire work in the district.

The DeDion proved successful, so Alfred added a Ford T to his stock, in 1913, and used this for taxi work also. In the same year a third vehicle was acquired, which is believed to have been a 20 horse power Ford T registered AY 2894, on 21st June 1913, and fitted with a saloon bus body for the conveyance of larger parties. In this way, at quite an early date, Alfred Adams found his peripheral interest in running motor vehicles to be overtaking his main employment of running the Woolpack Inn.

In 1914 Alfred Adams had a garage built at Middleton Hill, on land he bought for the purpose, and he left the Woolpack Inn. The structure of the building was erected by Seph Savage, a Northampton builder who was also Alfred's brother-in-law. The building of a garage was quite an expensive undertaking for a family business in its infancy and, indeed, Alfred had to borrow £25 from his brother-in-law to complete the project! However, the three vehicles already mentioned continued to be operated, but soon the DeDion was replaced by another Ford T. Alfred Adams was also able to retail petrol from his garage and undertake general repairs to other owners' vehicles. At this time there were no pumps and the petrol was stored in a large tank, being transferred with the aid of a funnel to cans and then to the customers' vehicles.

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.





Following the outbreak of the First World War, Alfred Adams' two sons enlisted in the fighting forces. Reginald joined the Royal Flying Corps whilst Eric enlisted in the Royal Army Service Corps. During the War, Alfred Adams ran two of his three Ford Ts into the ground and only one remained serviceable by the time Reginald and Eric were demobilised in 1918 and 1919 respectively. At this point their father made both sons partners in his business which thereafter traded as "Adams & Sons".

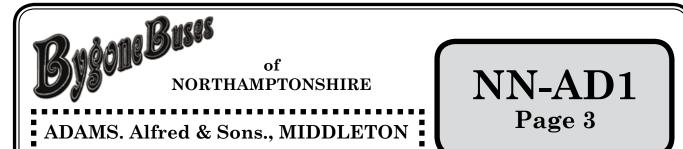
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The Middleton garage of Alfred Adams & Sons photographed in the early 1920s. The coach on the left is MB 3061 and has the name "Princess" on its rear panel. The charabanc partially in the garage is XD 8282, which was a Dennis. The two cars are Ford Ts. Alfred Adams stands behind the Dennis and the two gentlemen standing alongside the Ford T are Gerald Brewer (driver) and Eric Adams.

The next development was the purchase of another Ford T twenty horse power vehicle which was registered AY 6262 on 9th April 1919 and, like the earlier Ford, is believed to have been a fourteen seater saloon bus. Shortly afterwards an ex-Army A.E.C. 25-40hp lorry was bought and registered BD 3805 on 6th October 1919, at which time it was painted slate grey. This vehicle was initially acquired for local haulage work in the Middleton area and BD 3805 was let out at the rate of 2/6d (12.5p) per mile irrespective of distance. As the requirement for the lorry tended to be concentrated during the week, leaving the weekends free, it was not long before Middleton carpenter Walt Swindler was commissioned to build a wooden-roofed structure to fit onto the lorry body. Seats to accommodate thirteen passengers longitudinally each side of the lorry, two seats alongside the driver, a rear step ladder and canvas side sheets that were normally rolled but could be unfurled

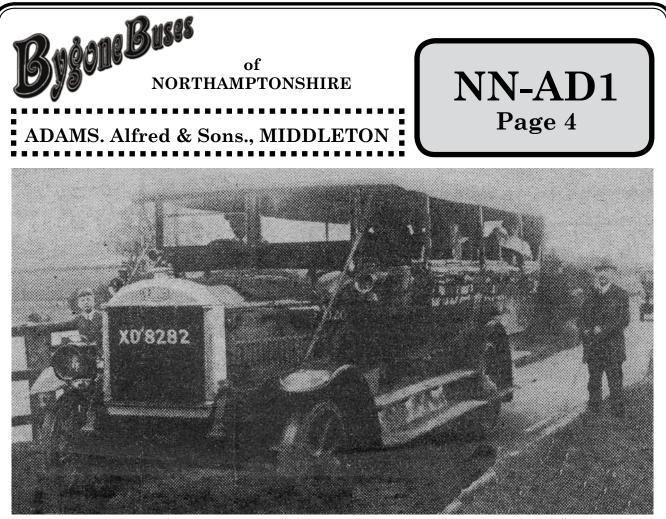


in inclement weather, were included in the conversion kit. Thus, mainly at weekends, BD 3805 was let out for hire and occasionally it went as far as Skegness, but more often it would take out local private hire parties, football teams and the like. It seems that this A.E.C. was replaced by a Daimler in February 1921, which took the registration number BD 3805 from the A.E.C. and its body too.

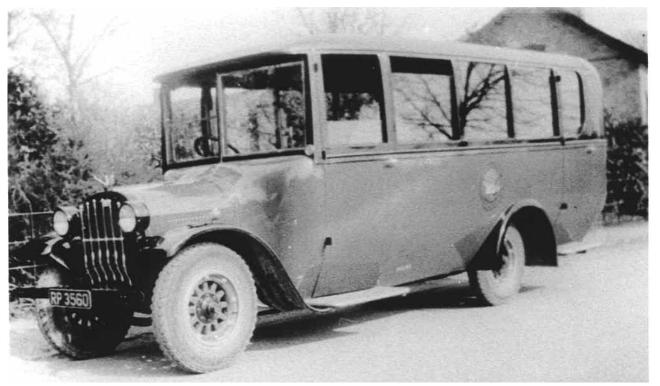


One of Alfred Adams Ford T buses photographed in the early 1920s after having been fitted with pneumatic tyres to the rear wheels. Hilda Adams occupies the driver's seat.

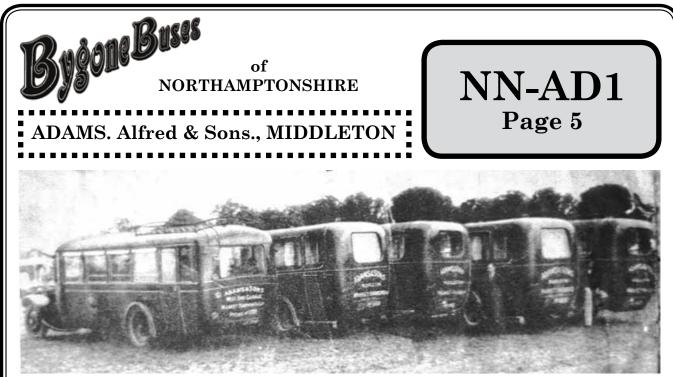
During the early 1920s several charabancs and saloon buses were added to the fleet, amongst which were a Dennis charabanc registered XD 8282; MB 3061 – possibly a G.M.C. and named "Princess" – and NR 3233, a fourteen-seater Chevrolet. The Dennis was a frequent operator to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley during 1924 and 1925. In 1926 two unusual chassis were purchased and these were "ROADKING" models made by the Michigan firm of Flint, being powered by smooth-running sleeve valve engines. Bodies constructed by the Kettering coachbuilders Blanchflower & Son were fitted to both chassis and the resulting vehicles became registered RP 2859 on 5th June 1926 and RP 3560 in December 1926. The Adams family always knew these buses as Russell-Knights and were aware that the chassis were originally built to carry ambulance bodies and believed them to have been of Canadian origin.



Not a very clear photograph but it shows Alfred Adams' twenty-seven seat Dennis charabanc registered in 1920 as XD 8282. This vehicle was new to Samuelson's Transport Company of London and passed to Alfred Adams via its manufacturer, Dennis Bros Ltd, in August 1922.



This picture shows RP 3560, one of Alfred Adams two rare Flint Roadking saloon buses with Blanchflower bodies.



An interesting, although not very distinct, rear view of what at first sight appears to be five Adams' buses. In fact only three vehicles are shown with the two Flint saloons depicted second and third from the left being repeated as buses four and five.

The livery of Adams' vehicles was generally mid-blue with cream reliefs and black mudguards, whilst the sides of the buses and coaches were adorned with a bluebird motif, as the firm used "Bluebird" as a trading name.

One of the larger towns situated near to Middleton was Market Harborough, some eight miles to the east and over the border in Leicestershire. Throughout the early 1920s Alfred Adams & Sons had advertised the availability of their vehicles in the Midland Mail. A gentleman named Billy Ward, who was a barber at Market Harborough and agent for Adams & Son, suggested to Alfred Adams that he would do well to open a depot at Market Harborough to take advantage of the business opportunities in that town. Alfred Adams took Billy Ward's advice and in 1927 acquired land in Wartnaby Street, Market Harborough and built a house with a garage to accommodate two saloon buses at the rear. Reginald Adams and his wife Marjorie went to live at Wartnaby Street when it opened in February 1928 and thereafter Reg looked after the Market Harborough branch of the business.

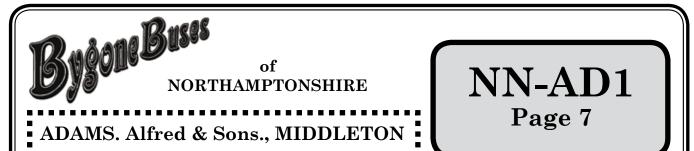
Over the years Alfred Adams & Sons pioneered quite a number of local and seasonal express coastal services. It is understood the first local route was started about 1926 and ran from Middleton via Cottingham, Bringhurst, Great Easton, Drayton, Medbourne, Ashley, Weston-by-Welland and Sutton Bassett to Market Harborough Square on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Next, two routes to Kettering were provided. The first ran on Fridays from Middleton via East Carlton, Pipewell and Rushton to Kettering, Rockingham Road but this route was not operated for more than two or three years. The second route to Kettering on Fridays, at first terminating at Rockingham Road stand and later at the Cattle Market. Workers' journeys were provided at some stage in the late 1920s from Middleton via Great Easton, Drayton, Medbourne, Ashley, Weston-by-Welland and Sutton Bassett to Symington's Corset factory at Market Harborough and this operation continued for as long as Alfred Adams & Sons were in business.



In this illustration Adams' Gilford 168SD registered UE 7868 with Strachans twenty-six seat coachwork can be seen.

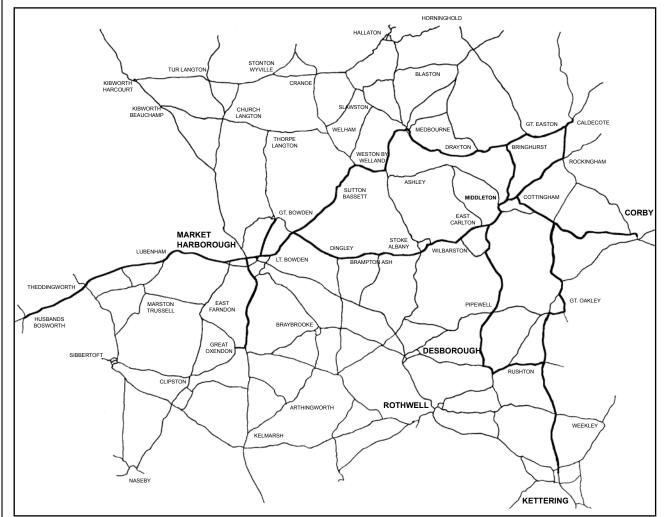
By the early 1930s, stage carriage routes were being provided on Tuesdays from Cottingham via Middleton, East Carlton, Wilbarston, Stoke Albany, Brampton Ash and Dingley to Market Harborough; from Market Harborough to Great Bowden and from Market Harborough to Oxendon. This latter service operated additionally on Saturdays and Sundays together with a Sunday facility from Market Harborough via Lubenham to Marston Trussell.

The operation of excursions and tours, particularly to Skegness and Great Yarmouth, led to the provision of regular express services to these two popular seaside resorts. The Great Yarmouth route picked up passengers at Market Harborough Square, Dingley, Stoke Albany, Wilbarston, East Carlton, Middleton, Cottingham, Corby (The Jamb), Stanion, Brigstock, Sudborough. Lowick and Islip before running via Thrapston to Huntingdon, Cambridge, Newmarket, Thetford, Norwich and Great Yarmouth. The Skegness route picked up at the same points as the Great Yarmouth service as far as Corby and then proceeded via Stamford, Spalding and Boston to Skegness. Excursion and tours licences



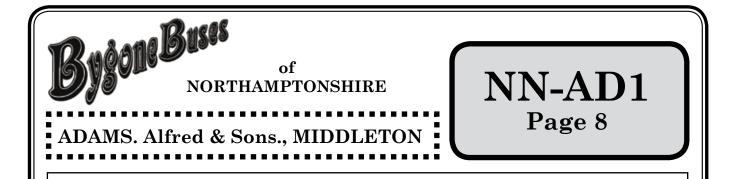
were held for operation from Market Harborough, Corby and Middleton cum Cottingham with popular destinations being served amongst which were Leicester (for pantomimes), London, Blackpool Illuminations, Race Meetings and many more.

Very little school contract work was undertaken by the Adams but one such contract that was operated for many years ran from Great Easton via Drayton, Medbourne, Ashley, Slawston, Welham and Thorpe Langton to Church Langton School. A Tuesday and Friday evening service from Great Easton, Caldecote, Rockingham and Cottingham to the Odeon Cinema at Corby was also provided.



Route diagram showing Adams' stage carriage services and general operating area.

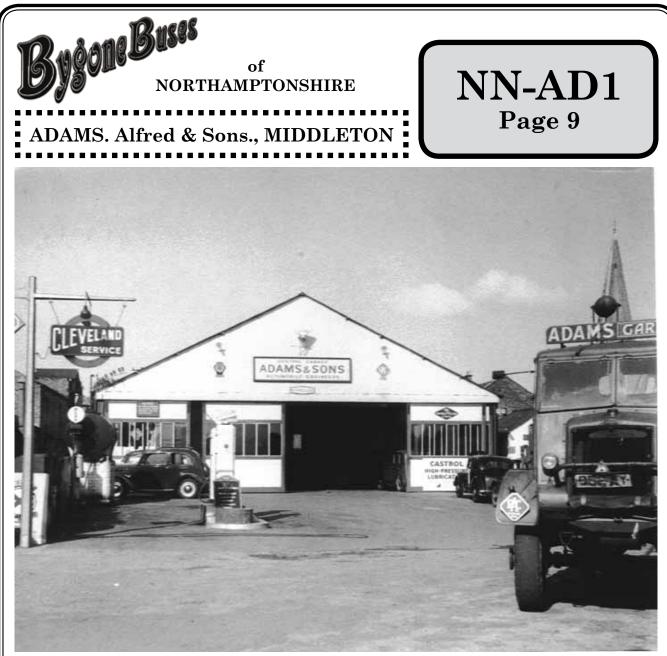
The Wartnaby Street garage at Market Harborough could accommodate only two vehicles and steps were taken, in the early 1930s, to restructure the business at Market Harborough. An existing motor garage situated in Fairfield Road came onto the market and was bought for £1,000 from Messrs. Eaton's, Iron Mongers of Harborough and these new premises were used to house buses and were operated as a general motor repair and petrol retailing facility. In due course the Market Harborough garage became the dominant branch.



ADAMS & SONS MOTOR COACH SERVICES.

		SDAYS ONLY.	
COTTINGHAM GT. EASTON DRAYTON MEDBOURNE ASHLEY TURN WESTON SUTTON MKT. HARBOROUGH	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	p.m. MKT. HARBOROUGH 3.10 SUTTON 3.15 WESTON 3.25 ASHLEY TURN 3.30 MEDBOURNE 3.35 DRAYTON 3.40 GT. EASTON 3.50 COTTINGHAM	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
MKT. HARBOROUGH GT. BOWDEN	a,m. p.m. 10.45 1.50 10.58 1.58	p.m. 3.30 GT. BOWDEN 3.38 MKT. HARBOROUGH	a,m. p.m. p.r. 11.0 2.0 3.4 11.8 2.8 3.4
MKT. HARBOROUGH OXENDON	p.m. 2.0 2.10	p.m. 4.0 OXENDON 4.10 MKT. HARBOROUGH	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
	TUES	SDAYS ONLY.	
COTTINGHAM MIDDLETON EAST CARLTON WILBARSTON STOKE ALBANY BRAMPTON ASH DINGLEY MKT. HARBOROUGH	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	p.m. 2.45 MKT. HARBOROUGH 2.50 DINGLEY 2.52 BRAMPTON ASH 3.0 STOKE ALBANY 3.2 WILBARSTON 3.5 EAST CARLTON 3.10 MIDDLETON 3.20 COTTINGHAM	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
	FRI	DAYS ONLY.	
COTTINGHAM GT. EASTON CALDECOTT ROCKINGHAM COTTINGHAM OAKLEY KETTERING	a.m. 9.30 9.40 9.45 9.55 9.50 10.0 10.10 10.30	p.m. 12.45 KETTERING 12.50 OAKLEY 1.0 COTTINGHAM 1.5 ROCKINGHAM 1.5 CALDECOTT 1.30 GT. EASTON 1.50 COTTINGHAM	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
	SATU	RDAYS ONLY.	
COTTINGHAM GT. FASTON DRAYTON MEDBOURNE ASHLEY TURN WESTON SUTTON MKT. HARBOROUGH		7.25 SUTTON 7.50 WESTON 7.55 ASHLEY TURN 8.0 MEDBOURNE 8.5 DRAYTON	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
MKT. HARBOROUGH OXENDON	p.m. p.m. p.m. 2.15 4.0 6.15 2.25 4.10 6.25	p.m. 8.35 OXENDON 8.45 MKT. HARBOROUGH	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
	SUN	DAYS ONLY.	
MKT. HARBOROUGH OXENDON		p.m. 8.45 OXENDON 8.55 MKT. HARBOROUGH	p.r 9.0 9.1
MKT. HARBOROUGH LUBENHAM MARSTON TRUSSELL		p.m. 9.15 MARSTON TRUSSELL 9.20 LUBENHAM 9.25 MKT. HARBOROUGH	p.r. 9 9.4 9.4
		ns during the Winter months o	
	-	oute. Ask the drivers for partic r. Tours & Excursio	
		es To Gt. Yarmouth &	
Hawke, Printer, Hallaton.	_		

A facsimile of Alfred Adams & Sons local service timetable current in the Autumn of 1934.



Adams & Sons' Fairfield Road garage situated in Market Harborough. Coaches were parked overnight in the garage forecourt.

Unfortunately, Alfred Adams died on 27th July 1939 aged seventy-two years whilst his wife, Mary, had predeceased him. The business was left in equal shares to his two sons Reginald and Eric. Reg continued running the Market Harborough end of the business whilst Eric managed the Middleton operations.

During the War the Royal Engineers commandeered the petrol pumps at the Middleton Garage and all operations of excursion and tours as well as express services were suspended in accordance with Government directives and reducing supplies of fuel. Towards the end of the War, the firm managed to acquire two Bedford OWB chassis with which to operate contracts transporting refugees from the Polish Hostel at Husbands Bosworth to Market Harborough, in which town they were employed. The first of the two was delivered in May 1944, as CUT 359, with a utility Duple body seating thirty-two passengers on wooden slatted seats, whilst the second one followed a year later as CUT 892, again with a Duple body, but this time seating thirty-two on upholstered seats. It was, at a later date, reseated as a twenty-six seat bus.



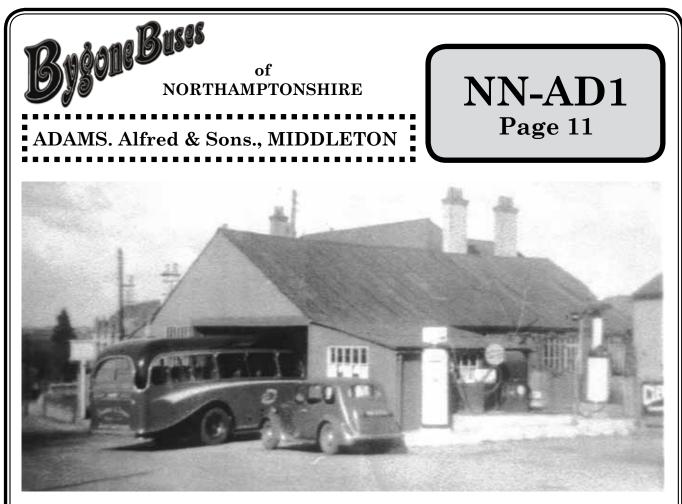
Examples of Adams & Sons tickets. The 2d composite single/return was printed on Bell Punch block E3248 and would have been current during the period Autumn 1941 to 1953. The 3d single was printed on Bell Punch block B6253 and these tickets were used between the Summer of 1934 and 1953. Also illustrated is one of Adams' parcel tickets.

In the post-war years the opportunity was taken to rebuild the business to its pre-war level and new or second-hand rolling stock was acquired as follows:

CRR 813 - Leyland Cub/Brush - C20F - New 1/37 - Acquired 10/47. EUT 145 - Bedford OB/Duple - C29F - New 7/48 FAY 451 - Crossley SD42/Burlingham - C33F - New 1/49. FJU 817 - Bedford OB/Duple - C29F - New 6/49. FJU 818 - Crossley SD42/Burlingham - C33F - New 7/49. GAY 726 - Bedford OB/Duple - C29F - New 7/50. AVA 877 - Bedford WTB/Duple - C26F - New -/39 - Acquired c2/51. LKN 546 - Bedford OB/Mulliner - C28F - New -/49 - Acquired c-/52.



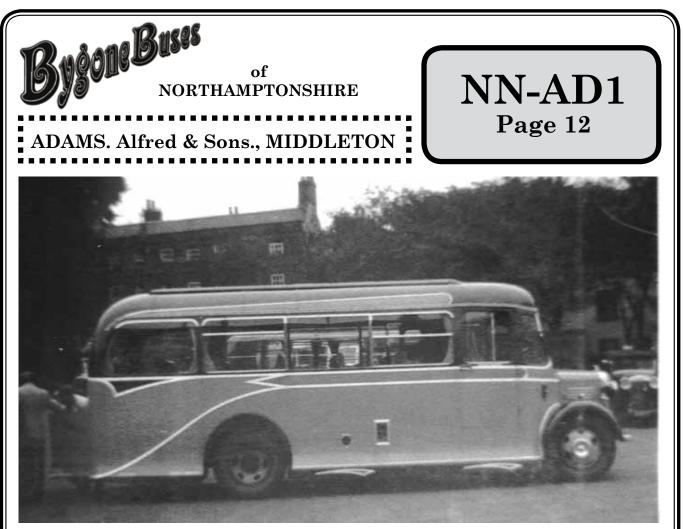
CRR 813 - the former Robin Hood Leyland Cub with attractive Brush coachwork photographed with subsequent owner Dixon & Wright of Moulton.



The Middleton garage as it appeared in about 1950 with Duple Vista bodied Bedford OB - FJU 817 - protruding from the premises. The garage entrance gave just sufficient headroom for the Bedford to enter and leave the building.



FAY 451 was an attractively proportioned Crossley with Burlingham thirty-three seat coach body on which the Adams' blue bird motif can easily be seen.



This photograph of a Bedford WTB with Willowbrook coachwork depicts one of Adams & Sons' vehicles but its number has not been identified.

On 19th May 1951, Reginald Adams died of cancer at the age of 55 years and this event was to precipitate the demise of the business. Reginald Adams left his half of the firm to his wife and son and it was decided that to avoid any conflict of interest the business should be sold. Negotiations were well advanced with the Hamblin Motor Group who were interested in the potential of the Fairfield Road, Market Harborough garage premises. At the eleventh hour the negotiations floundered and instead N&S Coaches of Kibworth bought the operations in March 1953. The sale included both the Middleton and Wartnaby Street, Market Harborough premises but not the Fairfield Road garage which was sold separately to another Kibworth buyer.

In 1953 the sole survivor of this story, Eric Adams, was 55 years old and not ready for retirement. Accordingly he and his wife Mabel opened a garage, filling station and cafe at Wilbarston which they ran until 1960 when Eric retired at 63.

N&S Coaches was more interested in the Market Harborough area than the Middleton operations and it was not long before the Middleton property and the right to trade as "Adams Coaches" was re-sold to a Mr G H Hutchinson, about whom a little more can be found under reference NN-HU2.

I am most grateful to Eric Adams who was extremely helpful in supplying information at the time research was being undertaken into the history of A Adams & Sons' operations.

		CHASSIS				BODY			DATES					J
оск 10.	REGN. NO.	MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D	PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES A DA	
	AY 2894	Ford	Т			B14R	_	6/13	9/14	?			:≚ :	
	AY 6262	Ford	т			B14R?	-	4/19	-	?			Ň	1
	BD 3805	A.E.C.	25-40hp		Swindler	B28R	-	?	10/19	2/21				
	BD 3805	Daimler	СВ	3377	Swindler	B28R	-	?	2/21	-/26?				
	XD 8282	Dennis	20022			Ch27		-/20	8/22	?			1 P 1 2	
	MB 3061	G.M.C.?						?	?	?	Dennis Bros/ Samuelson, London WC			
	NR 3233	Chevrolet	В	17532		B14F		10/23	8/25	3/26	/H Fowkes, Ibstock	(Handloy, Tilton		Ĩ
	RP 2859	Flint	Roadking	B406	Blanchflower	B20D	-	6/26	-	by -/35	ITT OWNES, IDSIUCK	/Handley, Tilton /G Howlett, Quorn	& Sons.	5
	RP 3560	Flint	Roadking	B4065	Blanchflower	B20D	-	2/27	-	12/33		/Thompson, Hathern		
	RY 5307	Reo		147007		-20-		8/27	-	c -/36		/W H Salt, Kings Cliffe	2 MIDD	ק י
	UE 7868	Gilford	168SD	10672	Strachans	C26F		3/29	-	c-/32		W H Sait, Kings Cille		
	RP 8510	Gilford	168OT	11269		B26F		3/30	-	by -/43		/Lawrence, Stockingford	• 🕂 • 💈	
	NV 1170	Bedford	WLB	108402	Duple	C20F	2709	3/32	-	by -/46		/J G Lewis, Cropwell Butler	ET	Ĝ
	NV 2044	Bedford	WLB	108821	Duple	C20F	3004	1/33	-	by c-/48		Mobile Shop, W Purser, Castlethorpe	TON	9
	VX 9907	Gilford	168OT	11748	Petty	B32F		2/31	c-/34	5/39	W S Yeates, Loughborough /Hicks Bros Ltd, Felsted	/Holdlow, Stoke-on-Trent		9
	NV 8369	Bedford	WTB	110925	Duple	C26F	8603	12/36	-	by c-/51	Supp W S Yeates, L'borough	A F Cooper, Rothwell	3	
	NV 8859	Bedford	WTB	111144	Duple Hendonian	C26F	8629	3/37	-	by c-/51	Supp W S Yeates, L'borough	Mobile Shop, Market Harbor- ough Co-op		
	?	Bedford	WTB		Willowbrook	C26F		?	?	?				
	WG 330	Gilford	168OT	11929	Wycombe	C32F	-	6/31	-/34	8/40	Gilford Motor Co., London /W Alexander Y26	/Don Everall,Wolverhampton	₁ –	Z
	WG 7250	Leyland	Roadking LZ2A	200714	Burlingham	C35F		6/38	-/39	3/53	/W Alexander K18	N&S Coaches, Kibworth	Page	
	CUT 359	Bedford	OWB	19646	Duple	UB32F	38774	5/44	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth	l ge	
	CUT 892	Bedford	OWB	25964	Duple II	B32F	41037	5/45	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth		
	CRR 813	Leyland	CUB KPZ2	6823	Brush	C20F	-	1/37	10/47	by 1/53	/Robin Hood, Nottingham	/Dixon & Wright, Moulton	ు (
	EUT 145	Bedford	ОВ	78817	Duple Vista	C29F	46719	7/48	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth		

Also reported as being with H J Goodman, Tavistock c-/32 to 6/35.
Apparently ordered by J H Mills, Brixworth but diverted to Adams.
Reseated to B26F in post-War years.

			CHASSIS			BODY			DATES							
FJU 818 Crossley SD42/7 98082 Burlingham C33F 4154 7/49 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth P GAY 726 Bedford OB 139592 Duple Vista C29F 43524 7/50 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth P P P	TOCK NO.		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D	PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	■		
FJU 818 Crossley SD42/7 98082 Burlingham C33F 4154 7/49 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth P GAY 726 Bedford OB 139592 Duple Vista C29F 43524 7/50 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth P P P		FAY 451	Crossley	SD42/7	97713	Burlingham	C33F	3682	1/49	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth			<u>G</u>
FJU 818 Crossley SD42/7 98082 Burlingham C33F 4154 7/49 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth GAY 726 Bedford OB 139592 Duple Vista C29F 43524 7/50 - 3/53 N&S Coaches, Kibworth Image: C29F		FJU 817	Bedford	ОВ	111779		C29F	46720	6/49	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth			jê
GAY 726BedfordOB139592Duple Vista DupleC29F435247/50-3/53N&S Coaches, KibworthN&S Coaches, KibworthNORTHAMMENTALI (Graham, Ramstall N&S Coaches, KibworthNORTHAMPTOULFLKN 546BedfordOB105630MullinerC28FT3985/49c-/523/53/Robinson, Oldham (Mitstable Coaches)/Graham, Ramstall N&S Coaches, Kibworth/Graham, Ramstall 		FJU 818	Crossley	SD42/7	98082		C33F	4154	7/49	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth			G
AVA 877 Bedford WTB 13912 Duple C26F 6143 2/39 c2/51 by -/52 3/53 //Robinson, Oldham //Graham, Ramstall NS Coaches, Kibworth NOR THAM POOR LKN 546 Bedford OB 105630 Mulliner C28F T398 5/49 c-/52 3/53 //Robinson, Oldham //Graham, Ramstall NS Coaches, Kibworth NOR THAM POOR NOR THAM POOR NOR THAM POOR OOR		GAY 726	Bedford	ОВ	139592		C29F	43524	7/50	-	3/53		N&S Coaches, Kibworth	:	fre	
LKN 546 Bedford OB 105630 Mulliner C28F T398 5/49 c-/52 3/53 ///Whitstable Coaches // Whitstable Coaches // Wh		AVA 877	Bedford	WTB	13912		C26F	6143	2/39	c2/51	by -/52	/Robinson Oldham	/Graham Ramstall		õ.	Z
		LKN 546	Bedford	OB	105630	Mulliner	C28F	T398	5/49	c-/52	3/53				& Sons MIDDLE	of ORTHAMPTONS

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