

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-AB2A
Page 1

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd (628173) Washbrook Rd., RUSHDEN & later "Harroldene", 93 The Ridge GREAT DODDINGTON

Paper NN-AB2 in this series relates the history of Fred Abbott's bus operations between 1928 and 1959. A combination of Fred's ill health and his faith in the previously excellent business relations he had with Johnson's Motors of Rushden was to lead to an amalgamation of the two businesses in 1959. This amalgamation was achieved by the formation of two companies, both incorporated on 14th May 1959. First, Abbott's Coaches Ltd was formed with a nominal capital of £1,500 divided into 1,500 Shares of £1 each with its registered office at Johnson's premises at Washbrook Road, Rushden. The 1,500 Shares were allotted as follows:-

Frederick Abbott	- 300 Shares.
Allison Millicent Abbott	- 200 Shares.
William Harold Johnson	- 500 Shares.
Reginald John William Welsford	- 500 Shares.

Secondly, Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd was formed on the same date with a nominal capital of £5,000 in 5,000 Shares of £1 each. The 5,000 Shares were allotted as follows:-

William Harold Johnson	- 1,500 Shares.
Keith Johnson	- 500 Shares.
Reginald John William Welsford	- 1,500 Shares.
Winifred Doris Welsford	- 500 Shares.
Frederick Abbott	- 1,000 Shares.

The proceedings of Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd will be considered further in paper NN-JO1A.

At the time of formation of the above two companies Fred Abbott was running three coaches which were A.E.C. Regal HRP 100; A.E.C. Reliance NBD 959 and Leyland Tiger PHA 295. Johnson's Motors, on the other hand, were operating five vehicles but were also the proprietors of a motor garage and filling station. Johnson's five buses were

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.

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON

A.E.C. Regal JBE 1; Maudslay Marathons FNV 256 and GUX 494; Leyland Royal Tiger FTL 754 and Commer Avenger 970 FNU. A grey and maroon livery was adopted for the joint fleet.

It seems that the company entitled Abbott's Coaches Ltd was used for public service vehicle operations and Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd for the garaging, car sales and service station commitments.

In July 1959 Abbott's Coaches applied to the Traffic Commissioners to take over the licences previously granted to both Fred Abbott and Johnson's as follows:-

T/C's Ref. Type Details

TER 5052/1	E&T	Starting from Gt.Doddington. (Previously Abbott's TER 222/2).
TER 5052/2	E&T	Starting from Wollaston. (Previously Abbott's TER 222/3).
TER 5052/3	E&T	Starting from Rushden. (Previously Johnson's TER 3578/1).
TER 5052/4	Exp.	Rushden to Sharnbrook, Colworth House. (Previously Johnson's TER 3578/2).

In essence Fred Abbott's business had concentrated on quality private hire operations plus his limited excursions programme and no schools or other contracts were undertaken. Johnson's, on the other hand, ran both works and school contract services in addition to private charters.

As far as the combined fleet was concerned the two half-cab Leyland Tigers with either Harrington or Whitson bodies and registered PHA 295 or FNV 256 were becoming somewhat dated in appearance for front line private hire work and were jointly replaced in November 1959 by another former Gliderways coach registered THA 441. This machine was a Leyland Royal Tiger and it carried a Harrington Wayfarer body seating forty-one passengers. Sadly a good photograph of it is not available but just a glimpse of it may be found in the illustration on the next page.

With hindsight the amalgamation was perhaps not a good idea and almost certainly would not have taken place had it not been for the health problems suffered by Fred Abbott. As events turned out the arrangements lasted for only about a year. During 1960 Fred Abbott's son David reached the age of twenty-one and he wished to enter the business as a coach driver. Messrs. Johnson and Welsford did not welcome this move and claimed there was no room in the business for David, or for that matter, for Fred's brother Ted Abbott to drive for the new company. Undoubtedly there were reasons for the Rushden men's reluctance to welcome other members of the Abbott family and the end result was the dissolution of the 1959 pooling arrangements. The precise date of the

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-AB2A

Page 3

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON



Photographed at Quorn Road, Rushden during the period of amalgamation of Abbott's and Johnson's operations were from left to right: JBE 1, PHA 295 and THA 441, this latter vehicle being the Leyland Royal Tiger received from Gliderways. The photograph must have been taken in November 1959 whilst PHA 295 and THA 441 were operating concurrently.



This illustration of one of Johnson's former vehicles - FTL 754 - a Leyland Royal Tiger with Duple Ambassador coachwork was also photographed during the period of amalgamation between Abbott's and Johnson's and the name "Abbott's" can be seen in the destination aperture.

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-AB2A

Page 4

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON

disentanglement is not known to the Author. Be that as it may, the company "Abbott's Coaches Ltd" reverted to Abbott family ownership and its registered office transferred to 93 The Ridge, Great Doddington. Likewise Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd went back to being owned by the Johnson and Welsford families.

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Following the dissolution of the joint operating arrangements Fred Abbott retained his three original vehicles or their replacements - i.e. A.E.C. Regal HRP 100; A.E.C. Reliance NBD 959 and Leyland Royal Tiger THA 441 whilst the rest reverted to Johnson's. With these coaches Fred Abbott continued for the remainder of the 1960 season and he also continued to hold his former excursions licences from Great Doddington and Wollaston which, during the course of the 1960s, had a number of period holiday tours added to the licences despite opposition from other holiday operators such as Wallace Arnold, Wesley's and even Associated Motorways. Fred also retained the grey/maroon livery adopted for joint operations.

At the end of March 1961 Fred traded in Royal tiger THA 441 in part exchange for a new A.E.C. Reliance which became registered XRP 500 in April of that year. Mounted on this Reliance chassis was a splendid Plaxton Panorama forty-one seat body which literally gleamed in its grey and maroon livery.



An offside view of the well-proportioned Plaxton Panorama bodied A.E.C. Reliance registered XRP 500.

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON



A photograph of the nearside of XRP 500 showing the classic lines of the Panorama body.

In the following year, 1962, Fred Abbott purchased another similar A.E.C. Reliance/Plaxton Panorama combination but this time it was a three-year-old used model registered 128 DPT. Fred parted company with the old faithful Whitson bodied A.E.C. Regal registered HRP 100 to make way for the newer 128 DPT.

The end of the 1963 coaching season saw the demise of the Duple Britannia bodied A.E.C. Reliance registered NBD 959 which Fred Abbott had bought new in 1956. Its replacement came in the Spring of the following year when ABD 134B took to the road. Again an A.E.C. Reliance and again fitted with an example of Plaxton's much loved Panorama bodywork, this time seating forty-three instead of forty-one, ABD 134B is illustrated overleaf.

Fred Abbott was destined to purchase just one more coach which he did in June 1966. Again it was a good used model and, not surprisingly, he stuck to the well-proven A.E.C. Reliance/Plaxton Panorama combination of chassis and body. The vehicle concerned was a three-year-old model registered XNL 109 that came from the Galley fleet based at Newcastle.

Fred Abbott's son David joined his parents business in October 1960 as a driver following the separation of Abbott's and Johnson's businesses in that year. David

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-AB2A

Page 6

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON



Guildhall Road, Northampton provides the backdrop for this picture of A.E.C. Reliance ABD 134B, new to Abbott's Coaches fleet in March 1964.

(Photo courtesy Terry Richardson).



Abbott's final intake of an A.E.C. Reliance was XNL 109 which in turn replaced a similar model some four years its senior.

(Photo courtesy F Gainsbury).

ABBOTT'S COACHES Ltd. RUSHDEN/
Gt.DODDINGTON

hankered after running a lorry and in 1963 his father bought such a vehicle for him. Otherwise the firm continued to trade in much the same way that it always had, operating only private hires and tours. By 1967 Fred Abbott was ready to retire having been in business for forty years. Consequently arrangements were made for Messrs. York Bros. (Northampton) Ltd to purchase the company, Abbott's Coaches Ltd, together with the Goodwill of the business and the three A.E.C. Reliances being operated at the time. Abbott's premises were excluded from the sale. Abbott's Coaches Ltd was valued at £28,000 and passed to York's on 1st January 1968. The agreement provided for David Abbott to be employed by York Bros for a year to ensure the smooth transition of the business to its new owners and for the benefit of Abbott's long-standing customers.

So ended Fred Abbott's forty-year career with buses and coaches and sadly Fred died on 5th December 1976. York's retained the good name of Abbott's Coaches Ltd until 1971 when the remnants were fully integrated into its own business and the Company ceased to trade in its original form. David Abbott went on to participate in joint ventures with York Bros. and eventually ran his own coaches again for a period in the 1980s. That, however, is another story!

The Author is indebted to David Abbott for his advice on various matters concerned with this paper.

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
HRP 100	A.E.C.	Regal III	9621E1479	Whitson	FC35F		1/53	5/59	c5/60	F Abbott, Gt.Doddington	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Gt.Doddington		
NBD 959	A.E.C.	Reliance	MU3RV878	Duple Britannia Harrington	C41F	1068/3	6/56	5/59	c5/60	F Abbott, Gt.Doddington	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Gt.Doddington		
PHA 295	Leyland	Tiger PS2/3	500387	Harrington	C37F	851	2/51	5/59	11/59	F Abbott, Gt.Doddington	W S Pegg, Caston		
FNV 256	Leyland	Tiger PS1/1	495743	Whitson	C33F		12/49	5/59	12/59	Johnson's Coaches, Rushden	No further operator		
JBE 1	A.E.C.	Regal IV	9821E520	Burlingham Seagull	C37C		4/52	5/59	c5/60	Johnson's Coaches, Rushden	Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd.		
GUX 494	Maudslay	Marathon III	79515	Metalcraft	C37F		?	5/59	5/59	Johnson's Coaches, Rushden	Tate, Markyate		
970 FNU	Commer	Avenger IV	94A0115	Duple Vega	C41F		2/58	5/59	11/59	Johnson's Coaches, Rushden	Dilks, Desborough		
FTL 754	Leyland	Royal Tiger PSU1/15	511098	Duple	C41C		3/52	5/59	c5/60	Johnson's Coaches, Rushden	Johnson's Motors (Rushden) Ltd		
THA 441	Leyland	Royal Tiger PSU1/16	530616	Ambassador Harrington Wayfarer	C41C	1191	4/53	11/59	c5/60	Gliderways, Smethwick	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Gt.Doddington		
Abbott's Coaches Ltd fleet after disassociation with Messrs. Johnson & Welsford and return to Great Doddington circa May 1960.													
HRP 100	A.E.C.	Regal III	9621E1479	Whitson	FC35F		1/53	c5/60	2/62	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Rushden	E R Dodd, Belton		
NBD 959	A.E.C.	Reliance	MU3RV878	Duple Britannia Harrington	C41F	1068/3	6/56	c5/60	11/63	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Rushden	T Tappin, Wallingford		
THA 441	Leyland	Royal Tiger PSU1/16	530616	Wayfarer	C41C	1191	4/53	c5/60	3/61	Abbott's Coaches Ltd, Rushden	York Motors, Chorlton		
XRP 500	A.E.C.	Reliance	2MU3RV3456	Panorama Plaxton	C41F	612573	4/61	—	1/68	—	York Bros., Northampton	1	
128 DPT	A.E.C.	Reliance	2MU3RA2463	Panorama Plaxton	C41F	592594	6/59	2/62	5/66	Graham, Blaydon	Lincoln Pilgrim Tours, Lincoln		
ABD 134B	A.E.C.	Reliance	2MU3RA470	Panorama Plaxton	C43F	642982	3/64	—	1/68	—	York Bros., Northampton	1	
XNL 109	A.E.C.	Reliance	2U3RA4152	Panorama Plaxton	C51F	632569	3/63	6/66	1/68	Galley, Newcastle	York Bros., Northampton	1	

NOTES: 1 - The Company was sold to York Bros., Northampton on 1/1/1968 so XRP 500, ABD 134B and XNL 109 were still officially owned by Abbott's Coaches Ltd.