

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-LE2

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LEATHERSICH Bros.

Robert William & Herbert James

t/a Red Bus Service

The Cross

WALGRAVE

Robert Leathersich was born in Wells, Norfolk in 1889 and prior to moving to Walgrave had been employed as a chauffeur to the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall, afterwards serving in the Army Service Corps during the First World War. However, the attraction of Walgrave to the then young Robert was Jessie Smith, whom he married in 1913. Robert Leathersich's move into transport came in 1920 when for £30 he purchased the Goodwill of Knight's carrier's business based on the Langham Arms public house at Walgrave.

Robert's first motor vehicle was a former Army Service Corps Leyland lorry which was equipped with a live chain-driven axle with no differential. The lorry was immediately fitted with covered bodywork and seats by Robert Leathersich with the aid of local farmer, Oliver Walden. Thus equipped with his Leyland, Robert Leathersich inaugurated a bus service from Walgrave via Hannington, Holcot and Moulton to Northampton, terminating in the yard of the Stag's Head public house situated in Abington Street. He also continued to carry goods using the same vehicle.

In the following year, 1921, Robert's younger brother Herbert, who was born in 1894, joined the business and on 8th October an ex-Army Napier ambulance that had been converted into a station wagon, was purchased from Heeps of Guilsborough and registered BD 6148. Herbert Leathersich many years later recalled operating to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley with this vehicle in 1924.

The order in which the Leathersich brothers then replaced their rolling stock is far from clear. It is believed that a twenty-one seater Dodge came next, in the 1922/3 period, to replace the original Leyland. Unfortunately the registration number of the Dodge is unknown which, in turn, makes it difficult to be precise about its dates of acquisition and disposal. However, the former Army Napier bus was last licensed in January 1925 and clearly a replacement bus must have been purchased at about this time. It is known

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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that Leathersich Bros ran a Gilford with a London registration mark and it is also known that they were running a Hackney Carriage registered XH 8790 in November 1926. Whether or not the above information refers to two separate vehicles or that the Gilford was registered XH 8790 is unclear.

Rather more specifically it is recorded that Robert and Herbert Leathersich purchased a second-hand Chevrolet in November 1926. This was a fourteen seater registered NR 5739 that had been new to Bishop of Asfordby in January 1925 and the Leathersich's retained it until August 1928. Incidentally, a taxi service was also provided for the good people of Walgrave and a second-hand Daimler limousine was used for this purpose.

Clearly Robert and Herbert Leathersich were pleased with the performance of their second-hand Chevrolet as they purchased a new vehicle of the same make on 24th March 1927 when RP 3895 was registered as a fourteen seat bus. This Chevrolet LM model was supplied by Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton but it is not known whether it was bodied by the same firm.



The fact that Leathersich Bros disposed of Chevrolet NR 5739 in August 1928 suggests that a replacement vehicle was probably acquired at this time, but details of it have not been discovered. The final bus bought by the Walgrave brothers was RP 8506 which was of Bean manufacture and carried a twenty-seater Willowbrook body. The livery of the majority of the Leathersich Bros fleet was predominantly red and the main service was known as the "Red Bus Service".

Following the acquisition of their Chevrolet bus in 1926 it is understood that Robert and Herbert Leathersich introduced two market day services. One ran from Walgrave via Hannington, Orlingbury, Little and Great Harrowden to Wellingborough on Wednesdays and the other ran from Holcot via Hannington, Walgrave and Broughton to Kettering on

In this photograph Herbert Leathersich can be seen standing in front of Bean RP 8506. Herbert is equipped with a cash bag so he was presumably running the service as a one-man operator.

LEATHERSICH Bros. - WALGRAVE

Fridays. Excursions and tours as well as private hires formed an important part of the Leathersich's business as, also, did the carriage of parcels.

LEATHERSICH BROS. RED BUS SERVICE

between OLD & NORTHAMPTON via Walgrave, Holcot & Moulton

Starts from Stag's Head, Abington Street

	Weekdays											Sundays													
	†	9	50	135	345	...	...	8	0	...	...	am.	555	735	9	5									
Old ...dep	...	9	50	135	345	...	...	8	0	...	...	..	..	555	735	9	5	s Sats only							
Walgrave	850	10	0	140	4	0	6	0	8	0	810	10	0	..	..	10	0	1	30	8	0	745	915	†	Weds & Sats.
Holcot ...	855	10	5	145	4	5	6	5	8	5	815	10	5	..	..	10	5	1	35	6	5	750	920	w	Weds only
Moulton...	9	5	1025	155	415	615	815	825	10	15	..	..	1015	1	45	615	8	0	930	..	..	..	..	†	Not Sats
N'pton ar	920	1030	210	430	630	830	840	10	*35	..	..	1030	2	0	630	815	945	..	..	..	..	..	..	*	Campbell Sq.

	†	10	0	1150	1215	3	0	350	5	07	0	845	9	0	10	*45	1050	210	650	830	9	50				
N'pton dp	10	0	1150	1215	3	0	350	5	07	0	845	9	0	10	*45	1050	210	650	830	9	50	..	..	..	..	..
Moulton...	1015	12	5	1230	315	4	5	515	715	855	915	11	0	11	5	225	7	5	845	1010	..	..	..	..	..	..
Holcot ...	1025	1215	1240	325	415	525	725	9	5	925	11	10	1115	235	715	850	1015	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Walgrave	1030	1220	1245	330	420	530	730	910	930	11	15	1120	250	720	855	1020	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Old ...arr	1035	1225	1250	335	430	535	735	915	935	11	20	1125	255	725	9	0	1025	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

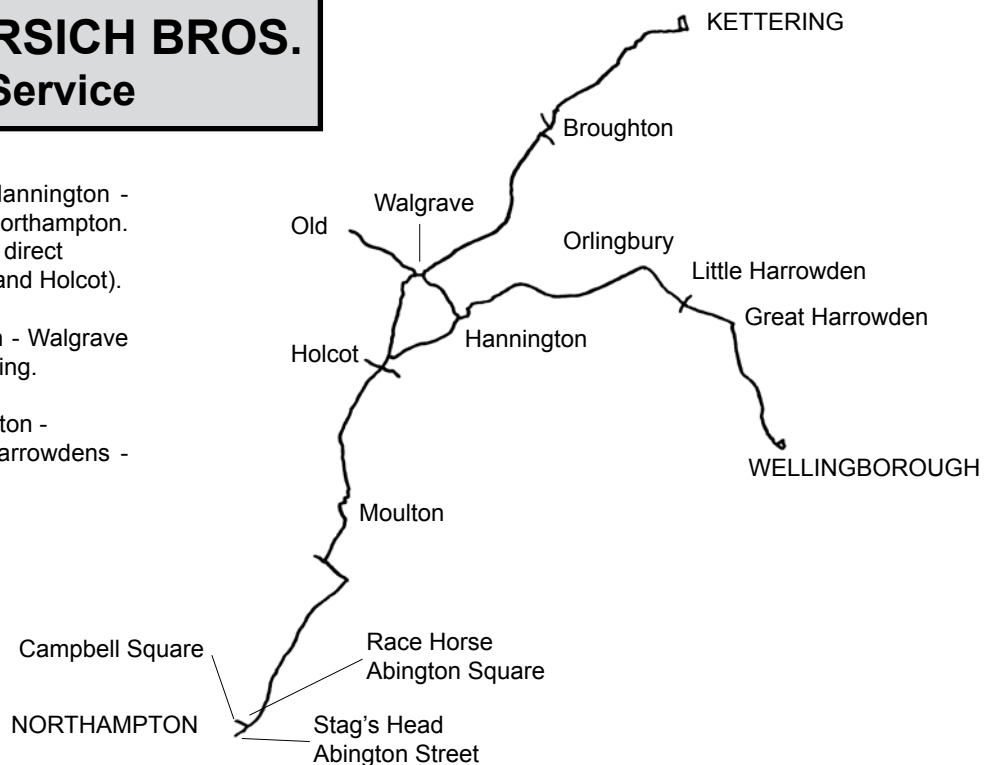
A facsimile of Leathersich Bros timetable between Old and Northampton taken from an "Enterprise" timetable of 1931.

LEATHERSICH BROS. Red Bus Service

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

Holcot - Hannington - Walgrave
- Broughton - Kettering.

Walgrave - Hannington -
Orlingbury - The Harrowdens -
Wellingborough



LEATHERSICH Bros. - WALGRAVE

The Road Traffic Act of 1930 necessitated Robert and Herbert Leathersich applying to the Traffic Commissioners for Road Service Licences for the routes they had hitherto been providing. Accordingly applications were submitted in the Autumn of 1931 for a stage-carriage licence for the Old - Walgrave - Hannington - Holcot - Moulton - Northampton route and for an excursions and tours licence for six tours starting from Walgrave. These were to run to Skegness, Hunstanton, Yarmouth, London Zoo, Northampton County Ground and to special events. Both licences were duly granted.

In July 1932 the Leathersich's applied to the Commissioners to add eighteen tours to their existing licence and most were to fairly local destinations within Northamptonshire and surrounding counties. A couple of months later, in September 1932, the Old to Northampton service licence was renewed with a modified timetable as shown on the next page. The Northampton terminal of the service from Old was for many years the Stag's Head P H in Abington Street. The 1931 Enterprise timetable also shows this same terminal point but from December 1926 onwards, the Northampton Borough Council Watch Committee was granting Leathersich Bros permission to use bus stands on Campbell Square. The Race Horse Inn at Abington Square is also believed to have served as a terminal but it may have been only a picking up point for journeys starting from Campbell Square.

For reasons now lost in the mists of time, Robert and Herbert Leathersich did not apply for licences for their two market-day services in 1931. This omission was rectified in September 1932 when a service at 10.30am from Walgrave to Wellingborough and return at 3.30pm on Wednesdays was applied for and duly granted under reference TER 304/3. The Holcot to Kettering service was similarly applied for at this time but it included Mondays to Saturdays workers' journeys to and from Kettering as well as the Fridays only market day facilities. This application attracted objections from Edward Church of Pytchley and was subsequently withdrawn in February 1933, having been superseded by the sale of the Leathersich's business to United Counties.

By this time United Counties Omnibus & Road Transport Company was interested in acquiring the businesses of those smaller operators whose services the Company believed would enhance its own business. The routes provided by Leathersich Bros and Wilfred Gibson of Walgrave interested United Counties as the Company was already running from Old via Walgrave to Kettering, from Moulton to Northampton and from Old via Brixworth to Northampton. The Old - Walgrave - Hannington - Holcot - Moulton - Northampton services of both Leathersich Bros and Gibson were therefore attractive to United Counties. Negotiations between the various parties led to an Agreement being signed on 25th November 1932 between Robert and Herbert Leathersich on the one part and United Counties on the other, for the Company to purchase the Goodwill of the Leathersich Brother's licences for the sum of £900. No vehicles were included in the deal and United Counties took over the operations from 1st January 1933, having been granted short-period licences by the Commissioners. The legalities with Leathersich Bros were not finally concluded until 2nd February 1933 when the Assignment of the business to United Counties was signed.

LEATHERSICH Bros. - WALGRAVE

LEATHERSICH BROS • RED BUS SERVICE

Week-days.

Depart	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Old	—	† 9 50	*10 0	1 30	—	*8 0
Walgrave	8 45	†10 0	*10 5	1 35	6 5	*8 10
Hannington	8 50	—	*10 10	1 40	—	—
Holcot	8 55	†10 5	*10 15	1 45	6 10	*8 15
Moulton	9 5	†10 15	*10 25	1 55	6 20	*8 25
Northampton	9 20	†10 30	*10 40	2 10	6 35	*8 40

Depart	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton	†10 0	11 50	3 50	7 0	*9 0
Moulton	10 15	12 5	4 5	7 15	*9 15
Holcot	10 25	12 15	4 15	7 25	*9 25
Hannington	—	—	—	—	—
Walgrave	10 30	12 20	4 20	7 30	9 30
Old	arrive 10 35	12 25	4 25	7 35	*9 35

†—Not Wednesdays. *—Wednesdays only.
‡ Departs 9-30 a.m. *Fridays.*

Saturdays.

Depart	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	Campbell Square. p.m.
Old	—	10 0	1 35	3 45	—	—	—	9 0	9 45
Walgrave	8 45	10 5	1 40	4 0	6 5	7 10	8 0	9 10	10 0
Hannington	8 50	10 10	—	—	6 10	—	—	—	—
Holcot	8 55	10 15	1 45	4 5	6 15	7 15	8 5	9 15	10 5
Moulton	9 5	10 25	1 55	4 15	6 25	7 25	8 15	9 25	10 15
Northampton arr.	9 20	10 40	2 10	4 30	6 40	7 40	8 30	9 40	10 30

Depart	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton	10 0	12 15	3 0	5 0	7 0	8 15	9 0	10 30	10 50
Moulton	10 15	12 30	3 15	5 15	7 15	8 30	9 15	10 45	11 5
Holcot	10 25	12 40	3 25	5 25	7 25	8 40	9 25	10 55	11 15
Hannington	—	12 45	3 30	—	—	—	9 30	11 0	—
Walgrave	10 30	12 50	3 35	5 30	7 30	8 45	9 35	11 5	11 20
Old	arr. 10 35	12 55	3 40	5 35	7 35	8 50	9 40	11 10	11 25

Sundays (Start from Campbell Square).

Depart	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Old	—	—	5 50	7 35	9 5
Walgrave	10 0	1 25	5 55	7 45	9 15
Hannington	—	1 30	6 0	—	—
Holcot	10 5	1 35	6 5	7 50	9 20
Moulton	10 15	1 45	6 15	8 0	9 30
Northampton	arr. 10 30	2 0	6 30	8 15	9 45

Depart	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton	10 45	2 15	6 50	8 30	9 50
Moulton	11 0	2 30	7 5	8 45	10 5
Holcot	11 10	2 40	7 15	8 55	10 15
Hannington	11 15	2 45	—	—	—
Walgrave	11 20	2 50	7 20	9 0	10 20
Old	arr. 11 25	2 55	7 25	9 5	10 25

Leathersich Bros's revised timetable between Old and Northampton applied for in September 1932.

LEATHERSICH Bros. - WALGRAVE

Both Robert and Herbert Leathersich joined United Counties as drivers at the time United Counties acquired their services. Robert continued to drive until his death in 1942 whilst Herbert, towards the end of his career, became an Inspector. After retirement Herbert survived until the late Autumn of 1970.

I am indebted to the late Herbert Leathersich and to Eric Leathersich, Robert's eldest son, for their recollections of the "Red Bus Service" operations.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
?	Leyland				Lorry/ Bus		?	-/20	c-/22	War Dept.	?	1
BD 6148	Napier		2222		B--R		?	10/21	1/25	Supplied by Heeps, Guilsborough	No further owner	2
?	Dodge				B21		?	c-/22	?	Supplied by Grose, Northampton		
NR 5739	Chevrolet				B14		1/25	11/26	8/28	Bishop, Asfordby	Chalice, Newmarket	
?	Gilford						?	?	?			3
XH 8790	?						?	by 11/26	?			3
RP 3895	Chevrolet	LM	15081		B14F		3/27	—	12/32	Supplied by Grose, Northampton		4
?	?						?	c8/28	12/32	?		
RP 8506	Bean		2218/ 11W	Willow- brook	B20F	2323	3/30	—	12/32			5

- Notes:**
- 1 - Formerly an A.S.C. chain-driven lorry.
 - 2 - Originally an Army ambulance.
 - 3 - The Gilford and XH 8790 may be one and the same.
 - 4 - RP 3895 - last owner J Gillies, Glasgow and last licensed 12/36.
 - 5 - RP 8506 - last owner H Delaney, Bolton and last licensed 12/39.