

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-WA9

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WARGATE MOTOR ENGINEERING Co.

and from 1934 **WARGATE MOTORS Ltd. (293338)**

Wellingborough Road,

RUSHDEN

The history of this operator has been particularly difficult to unravel and positive information concerning it is sparse. That which follows is believed by the Author to be correct but there are many uncertainties.

The first clue comes from the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee of Wellingborough Urban District Council for 3rd November 1920 when an application was received and granted for Messrs Warner, Heygate and Brown to ply for hire with one bus. Warner was Arthur W Warner of 180 Wellingborough Road, Rushden and it is understood that he was joined by Frank L Heygate in forming the WARGATE MOTOR ENGINEERING Company at about this time. The first three letters of Warner's name were joined to the last four letters of Heygate's to arrive at the name of WARGATE. Warner was a motor engineer whilst Heygate was a bank manager and a sleeping partner in the business. The identity of the third man in the licence application - Brown - remains a mystery.

The single-deck bus used by the above gentlemen was a 30hp Leyland, presumably ex-War Department, and registered XA 8493 on 19th March 1920, transferring to Wargate on 10th November 1920. As the bus was registered in the Wargate name, clearly the Company had been formed by this date. Precisely what services were operated by Wargate at this time is unknown but presumably a Rushden to Wellingborough operation featured amongst private hires. Furthermore, a Ford T bearing the number BD 7143 was registered in Arthur Warner's name and licensed as a public conveyance in December 1922. No other details are known of this vehicle but as it was subsequently sold to J H Gaunt of Raunds - a known taxi/private hire operator - it seems unlikely to have been a bus.

It is understood that the operation of XA 8493 and BD 7143 continued for only a few years before Messrs Warner and Heygate, together with Brown, if he had a financial interest, sold the business - but to whom is unclear. Arthur Warner recommenced business as a motor engineer and trader on his own account in Montague Street, Rushden and continued to trade for many years.

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.

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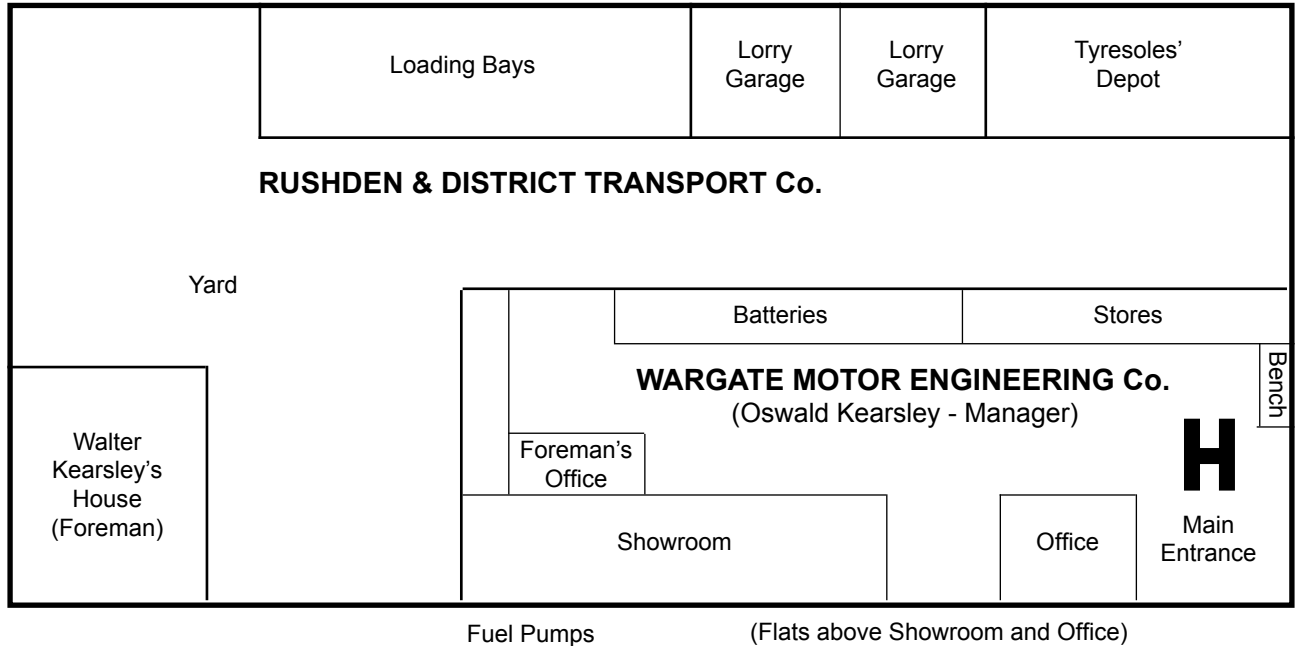
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Maudslay already mentioned, examples of Leyland, A.E.C., Commer, Guy and Daimler-manufactures were all owned. Full details can be found on page 6 and some of the fleet are illustrated below and on the next pages.



WELLINGBOROUGH ROAD, RUSHDEN

Layout of Wargate Motors' premises at Wellingborough Road, Rushden in the late 1930s.



This unusual looking Maudslay SF40 registered AUE 388 and apparently powered by a Meadows engine, was new in 1936. Its coachwork certainly featured novel styling.

(Photo courtesy A J George)

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Another view of the Jensen bodied Maudslay SF40 registered AUE 388 but this time accompanied by a classic Plaxton bodied Leyland Tiger TS7. Driver Bert Walters features on the left with Eric Pratt on the right. Between them is the organiser of the party of Irthlingborough Town Band Club Members that is being conveyed by Wargate coaches to Southend.

As far as it is known, in the post-War years Wargate operated only contract services and private hires, holding no Road Service Licences for stage, express or excursion and tours operations.

Returning to the company of Wargate Motors Ltd, by 1947 Mr A F Knight had been replaced as a Director by Oswald Kearsley. With the likelihood of the Nationalisation of the Rushden & District Transport Company's Northamptonshire to Glasgow haulage service, this latter company was sold to Direct Transport Service (Wellingborough) Ltd in the early post-War period.

During 1956 Wargate Motors' disposed of their contract bus and private hire operations but continued in business as motor agents for a few more years. The Wellingborough Road, Rushden premises was demolished in 1966 and a petrol filling station built in its place.

The Author is grateful to Geoff Wheeler who was an apprentice at Wargate Motor Engineering Company from 1935 to 1940 for his memories of the firm and the layout of its premises.

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A line of four of Wargate's fleet from the 1950s showing on the extreme left the side of the former Skill's GTV 427, a Guy Arab with Strachans bodywork adorned with additional aluminium beading. Next is Leyland Titan TD7 FOF 305 which originated with Birmingham Corporation and then a Daimler CO5G registered VV 5794. This vehicle started life with Northampton Corporation but was used by Wesley's of Stoke Goldington prior to its sojourn with Wargate. Finally, on the right, is a rear view of the Plaxton bodied Leyland Tiger TS7 registered FV 9227.

(Photo courtesy of Ron Wellings)



This photograph taken in 1966 whilst the Wargate Garage was being demolished shows the former showroom and service bay.

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STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
	XA 8493	Leyland	30hp	?	?	B		3/20	11/20	c12/22?	?	?	
	BD 2945	Ford	T	2773809	?	Lorry		-/21	—	12/25	—	No further owner	1
	BD 7083	Ford	T	650403	?	Lorry		11/22	—	by-/26	—	G F Whipple, Rushden	1
	BD 7143	Ford	T	654208	?	?		12/22	—	by 3/27	—	J H Gaunt, Raunds	1
	AUE 388	Maudslay	SF40	5308	Jensen	C36F		4/36	by 4/48	c-/56	Bunty, Coventry	To Showman	2
	FV 9227	Leyland	Tiger TS7	12695	Plaxton	C32F		6/37	10/48	c-/56	Jackson, Blackpool		
	FAY 836	Commer	Q4	15A1803S	Quorn	C30F		3/49	9/50	?	Pole Syston		3
	VX 5169	Leyland	Titan TD1	71166	Duple (6/42)	L28/27FD	4426	4/30	3/51	3/54	Barton, Chilwell (390)	No further owner	
	EK 8108	Leyland	Titan TD1	71992	Massey	L24/24R	C786	3/31	3/51	9/51	Measham Mtr Auctions/ Barton, Chilwell (501)	Hales Bros., Farcet	
	GTV 427	Guy	Arab I 5LW	FD25943	Strachans	UL27/28R		6/43	3/52	by -/55	Skill, Nottingham (60)	Turville (Showman), Nottingham	
	TY 9518	A.E.C.	Regal	6621347	E.C.W.	C31R	4934?	4/32	-/52	c-/56	Seamarks, Rushden	R Gray (Showman), Kempston	
	KG 8909	A.E.C.	Regent	06614387	N.C.M.E.	H30/26R		-/36	-/52	c-/56	Cardiff Corporation		
	FOF 305	Leyland	Titan TD7c	303190	Leyland	H28/24R		10/39	9/52	c-/56	Birmingham Corpn	Shelton Coaches, Wollaston	
	VV 5794	Daimler	COG5	9962	E.E.C	H30/24R		4/37	-/53	c-/56	Wesley, S.Goldington	M J Wilkinson (S/mn), Ilkeston	

NOTES: 1 - BD 2945 and BD 7083 were lorries not connected with the passenger side of the business. BD 7143, however, was a Hackney Carriage but may have been a taxi.
2 - AUE 388: Possible alternative body builder to Jensen Motors Ltd, West Bromwich is W J Smith, also of West Bromwich.
3 - FAY 836: Body by Crawford Prince-Johnson Ltd., Syston whose products were often known as "Quorn".