

SEAMARKS (Motors) Ltd (395811)

54 High Street South and later

106 High Street,

RUSHDEN

This paper continues the story of the Seamarks family's involvement with bus and coach operations as detailed in papers NN-SE2 followed by NN-RU2. The company known as Rushden Motors Ltd was renamed Seamarks (Motors) Ltd on 17th April 1947 at which time the directors were Ralph Leonard Seamarks of Higham Ferrers and Herbert Eric Perkins, Haulage Contractor of Rushden. A former director of Rushden Motors Ltd - William George Stanley Ward - had resigned in October 1946 but surviving records do not show if he disposed of his shareholding at the same time.

At 17th April 1947 Seamarks (Motors) Ltd is believed to have been operating seven buses and coaches which comprised A.E.C. Regals TY 9518, GF 1736 and DBD 72; two Dennis Lancets registered AWR 756 and AWT 621, a T.S.M. carrying the registration UU 3171 and a Bedford OB with the index mark CNV 668.

With regard to the premises Seamarks (Motors) Ltd inherited from Rushden Motors Ltd, the main garage and filling station was at 54 High Street South, Rushden and the coach operating base was at Nene Road, or Rogue Lane as it was sometimes called, at Higham Ferrers. In addition the renamed company - Seamarks (Motors) Ltd - acquired land and buildings in late April 1947 situated between High Street and Rectory Road, Rushden. This site had a shop frontage of approximately 103 feet, known as 106 High Street whilst the land to the rear had access from Rectory Road to a garage and various other buildings. The site had earlier been part of Marriott's Farm and Seamarks (Motors) Ltd established its bus and coach operating base on this site during 1947. Today there is a plaque situated on a wall at the present Hamblin's Place, Rushden stating that the area to the rear of the plaque was the site formerly occupied by Seamarks' bus depot. The shop premises at 106 High Street was at some stage opened as a travel and booking agency by Seamarks' who also moved their offices to this site and disposed of the High Street South premises.

On 4th February 1948 Herbert Eric Perkins resigned as a director of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd and as the Articles of Association of the company stipulated a minimum of two directors, Leonard Seamarks' younger brother Reginald was appointed a director to replace

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Perkins. It was also a requirement that directors should hold 50 Shares but whether or not Reginald Seamarks was given or purchased these is far from clear.

It is now necessary to leave Seamarks Northamptonshire operations to look at what Leonard Seamarks was up to in Bedfordshire and other areas. In Dunstable there was a long-established coaching business run by T W Blake. This business was based at 202 High Street South, Dunstable in premises which had been used as a Wartime fire station. Blake was operating only one vehicle in 1946 but held excursion and tours licences that had been in suspension during the War. At an unknown date late in 1946 or early in 1947 Leonard Seamarks, with the financial backing of Gerald Yorke who was a Motor Engineer of Northampton, formed Dunstable Coaches Ltd (417753), installing John Head as Secretary and, a little later, as Manager.

John Head, mentioned above, on leaving the armed forces after the War, returned to work in Rushden in the leather trade but could not settle to the indoor life. After a very short period he went to work for Leonard Seamarks as an accounts clerk and general clerical worker at the garage situated in High Street South, Rushden. Following Seamarks' acquisition of T W Blake's business and the formation of Dunstable Coaches Ltd, for which John Head was appointed a Director and Secretary, it was anticipated that the incumbent manager would build up the business. This did not happen so John Head was also appointed Manager to develop the concern.

Moving now to Leicestershire, Thomas Herbert Smith of Leicester Road, Groby had commenced business as a bus operator in 1922. Some twenty years later he and his wife Hilda formed a limited company under the title of T H Smith (Groby) Ltd (381740) on 15th July 1943. Thomas Smith held 1,002 Shares in the company and his wife held 1,000. On 5th December 1946 Leonard Seamarks, again with financial backing from Gerald Yorke, purchased the entire shareholding of T H Smith (Groby) Ltd, with Seamarks and Yorke replacing Mr & Mrs Smith as Directors.

Next we move to Oxfordshire where for many years Ove Back had operated bus services in the Witney area. Subsequently Back's Coaches (Witney) Ltd was incorporated on 17th October 1946 with a Capital of £3,000 divided into 3,000 Shares of £1 each. The Subscribers and Directors were Hans Julius Ove Back and his wife, May Evelyn Back. Within a couple of months half the 3,000 Shares were held by Ove Back and the other half by Percy Daniel Sleeman of Maidenhead who was a Director of Arlington Motor Co Ltd. On 30th December 1946 this latter gentleman replaced Mrs Back as a Director of Back's Coaches and on 15th January 1947 Ralph Leonard Seamarks and Gerald Yorke acquired the entire capital, replacing Ove Back and Percy Sleeman as Directors on this date and appointing John Head as secretary. John Head may also have been a Director but this is not certain.

Towards the end of 1947 a Dennis Lancet thirty-two seater Duple bodied coach was acquired from H & H Motorways of Coventry and this machine was registered RF 9838. Soon afterwards three Burlingham bodied A.E.C. Regal saloons were purchased from

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Hanson's of Huddersfield and these remained in Hanson's colours whilst in Seamarks' ownership. These thirty-five seater buses registered VH 4873/4/576 were purchased on the strength of Seamarks having been awarded a contract to convey Displaced Persons from Brigstock Camp to the Fletton Brickyards near Peterborough, work that required a daily provision of four vehicles. Many of the operations undertaken by Seamarks' were contract hires whilst excursions and private charters accounted for the rest of the firm's business. Seamarks' vehicle were frequently used to take casual workers on fruit or potato picking missions in the post-War period when many local families undertook this work to boost their incomes and, at the same time, to provide recreation of a sort.



*An illustration of one of the ex-Hanson's 1933 A.E.C. Regals with 1941 Burlingham thirty-five seat bus bodies acquired by Seamarks in January 1948. This bus was registered VH4873.
(Photo courtesy J Bennett collection)*

The Capital of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd was increased on 2nd November 1948 to £25,000 by the creation of 15,000 Ordinary Shares and a total of 18,000 Shares had been allotted at this time, with Leonard Seamarks holding 13,390. Concurrently Gerald Yorke, Motor Engineer of Northampton, held 3,444 Shares and the then secretary of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd - John Ernest Head - was allotted 1,666 Shares. It is assumed that Messrs Yorke and Head also became directors of the company. Reginald Seamarks was now referred to just as Manager suggesting he was never in fact a Shareholder.

This action to increase the Capital of the company was without doubt connected with the purchase by Seamarks (Motors) Ltd of 900 fully paid up £1 Shares in Dunstable

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Coaches Ltd; 2,002 fully paid up £1 Shares in T H Smith (Groby) Ltd and 3,000 fully paid up £1 Shares in Back's Coaches (Witney) Ltd. Thus Leonard Seamarks' and no doubt Gerald Yorke's personal holdings in the above three companies were transferred to Seamarks (Motors) Ltd, apparently making the three former companies wholly owned subsidiaries of the latter company.

The various acquisitions made by Leonard Seamarks in the early post-War period stretched him financially and he decided to dispose of Dunstable Coaches Ltd in July 1949. The purchasers were Messrs Alan Huckvale and Herbert Hemmings, directors of the well-known Kenilworth/Coventry firm of H & H Motorways Ltd, trading as Bunty Coaches. Hence, Dunstable Coaches Ltd under its new ownership also adopted the Bunty trading name. After several subsequent changes of ownership the firm eventually became part of the Tricentrol Group of Companies.

Four buses and coaches in Seamarks' fleet were replaced in 1950 by the purchase of three used vehicles and one new one. The used machines comprised a 1934 A.E.C. Regal registered JU 4282 with a Willowbrook thirty-two seat coach body; a 1938 Dennis Lancet with a thirty-nine seat Duple body and registered ETO 515 whilst the third vehicle was a double-deck Massey bodied Guy Arab that had formerly been in the Doncaster Corporation fleet. This was registered CDT 197. The single new coach for the excursion and private hire market was GJF 607, a Dennis Lancet III with Yeates fully-fronted thirty-seven seat bodywork.

Seamarks (Motors) Ltd inherited the two excursions and tours Road Service Licences for which permits had previously been granted to Rushden Motors Ltd. The first one - TER 3454/1 - was for tours starting from Higham Ferrers Market Square with pick-ups at Rushden whilst the second - TER 3454/2 - was for tours starting at Rushden Wheatsheaf and picking up at Higham Ferrers. In December 1950 Seamarks applied to the Traffic Commissioners for Express Service licences to convey employees of John White's shoe factories on three routes from Raunds Square to Rushden; from Earls Barton Square to Higham Ferrers and from Finedon Allen Road to Rushden. United Counties objected to the applications as they ran stage-carriage services from all three towns or villages to Rushden and Higham Ferrers and the Traffic Commissioners refused Seamarks their licences. Some contract buses were however from time to time operated by Seamarks' for the John White Group. Seamarks' next attempt to gain licences for express service operations came in the Autumn of 1952 when services were proposed to carry employees working at Molesworth U.S.A.F. base and at Chelveston Aerodrome from Kettering and Rushden respectively. Both application were withdrawn by February 1953.

During the course of the early 1950s various applications were made to the Traffic Commissioners by Seamarks (Motors) Ltd for additional excursions and tours which met with a number of objections from United Counties, Birch Bros, Premier Travel, York Bros and British Railways. About half the required additional tours were rejected and about half were successfully licensed. In February 1954 Seamarks (Motors) Ltd was successful in having an Express Road Service Licence granted - TER 3454/8 - for a new

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route between Rushden and Humberstone Gate, Leicester on Saturdays, presumably for shopping trips and football matches. Despite the anticipated objections from British Railways and United Counties, Seamarks was granted the licence on 26th February 1954 and the service started on 6th March 1954.

In October 1952 Seamarks (Motors) Ltd acquired the business of Messrs Jones & Allen of Corby (NN-JO3) together with that firm's Austin CXB/Thurgood bodied coach registered KRO 658.

IT'S NEW & NEWS FOR CORBY **SEAMARKS (Motors) Ltd.**

106, HIGH STREET, RUSHDEN

HAVE PURCHASED THE BUSINESS OF

JONES and ALLENS

COACH PROPRIETORS, CORBY.

AND OFFER THEIR FLEET OF

PULLMAN COACHES

TO YOU FOR YOUR

Private Parties, Works Contracts, Football Fixtures, Etc.

Seating from 25 to 39 in Comfort

Applications for this Service to:—

75, TANFIELDS AVENUE, CORBY

Phone 2396, and

RUSHDEN—Phone 2541

"DISTANCE NO OBJECT"

Ac17

Going back a few years to 1950, Leonard Seamarks who had no children to succeed him, decided to dispose of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd as a going concern. Messrs Hamblin's of Leicester was the purchaser and this firm was also engaged in the motor retail trade and additionally acquired a number of small bus firms in the 1950s and 1960s. The exact date on which Seamarks Motors transferred to Hamblin's has not been established but is believed to have been March 1950. Thus the subsidiary operations of T H Smith (Groby) Ltd and Back's Coaches (Witney) Ltd passed into Hamblin's ownership at the same time. Incidentally, T H Smith's services subsequently passed to Midland Red in 1954 with most of the rolling stock going

to Mellor's Coaches of Enderby whilst Back's Coaches (Witney) Ltd was ultimately compulsorily wound up in October 1996. The most noticeable difference to the Company after this change of ownership was the acquisition of quite a number of new coaches, mostly of Bedford or Dennis manufacture and mostly being retained in the fleet for remarkably short periods. For example and as mentioned earlier, GJF 607 was introduced to the fleet in October 1950 whilst in 1951/2 four new and another two secondhand machines were taken into stock, comprising two Dennis Lancets, a Bedford SB and a Dennis Falcon, all being new and respectively registered GNV 806, GNV 978, HBD 546 and HBD 747. The two used vehicles were a Dennis Lancet registered GRY 132 which was no more than a year old and another Dennis Lancet registered AAU 506. It is likely that the latter two vehicles were acquired for contract operations only.

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GJF 607 was a Dennis Lancet III with a full-fronted Yeates coach body seating thirty-seven passengers. Arriving in October 1950 it was the first new vehicle supplied to Seamarks by the Hamblin's Group. (Photo courtesy The Omnibus Society).



GNV 806 was a Dennis Lancet III delivered new in May 1951 to Seamarks with a Yeates thirty-seven seat body. It is seen herein its cream and green livery at the Rectory Road, Rushden garage

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New to Seamarks in March 1952 was this Bedford SB with Duple thirty-three seat bodywork. After acquisition by Hamblin's of Leicester the livery of the Seamarks' fleet was changed to cream and maroon. The two Union Jacks had no doubt been added for the 1953 Coronation celebrations and HBD 546 is seen in this view at Epsom in 1953.

(Photo courtesy ATPH-Hustwitt).



Dennis Falcon HBD 747 carried Yeates coachwork seating thirty-five passengers in its fully-fronted body and was a quite attractive machine.

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Also for the contract fleet the elderly A.E.C. Regal registered TY 9518 had its original Robson body removed by Seamarks and replaced by an Eastern Coach Works body acquired from Irthlingborough, having almost certainly previously graced United Counties Bristol JO5G NV 6639. An enthusiast who recalls Seamarks' undertaking this rebodging says "it was done on the cheap for use as a works contract vehicle, with what looked like domestic plywood and 2" x 2" timber used to match the cab front end to the A.E.C. chassis and finished off with what appeared to be household paint, applied so thickly there was no chance of seeing any raised remains of a fleet number on the back of the vehicle, through the brush marks."

The years 1953/4 saw Hamblin's supplying four new Bedford coaches and a Commer Avenger to their Seamarks' operations, along with a couple of older used vehicles for the contract fleet. The four Bedfords were all SB variants, one of which carried a Yeates Riviera body - JJF 672 - whilst the other three had Duple Vega coachwork and these were registered KBD 14, PRR 72 and KNV 217. The Commer Avenger II - KRP 688 - also carried a Duple Vega body which seated forty-one passengers. The second-hand machines



This fine view of JJF 672, a Yeates Riviera bodied Bedford SB new in April 1953, was taken at Higham Ferrers Square whilst on display to encourage private hire bookings for Seamarks (Motors) Ltd. (Photo courtesy A J George)

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comprised a 1948 Bedford OB registered NTW 706 and ERP 393, a 1949 Maudslay Marathon, with Duple and Whitson bodies respectively. The final acquisition of a second-hand bus was made in March 1955, being CUX 465 a Duple bodied Bedford OWB model dating from 1945. This vehicle may not have been used by Seamarks, passing to building contractor Robert Marriott of Rushden a month after purchase.



By the time this photograph of PRR 72, the Bedford SBG with its Duple Vega body had been taken, the coach had passed to York Bros of Northampton.



The best that can be done to illustrate KNV217 is this photograph which unfortunately was cropped at both front and rear ends. It was a Bedford SBO (diesel engined) with Duple Vega bodywork seating thirty-eight.

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Early in 1955 Hamblin's decided to dispose of the coaching side of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd and Messrs York Bros (Northampton) Ltd became the purchaser. As early as February 1955 York Bros applied to the Traffic Commissioners to take over Seamarks' two Excursions & Tours Licences and the Rushden to Leicester Express service route and these three licences were granted to York Bros under references TER 3304/14-16. The transfer of assets from Seamarks to York Bros took place on 30th April 1955 when Bedford SB coaches PRR 72 and KNV 217 changed hands. In addition Seamarks' travel agency operated from 106 High Street, Rushden was taken over by York Bros and the premises were leased to this latter firm.

Thus ended Seamarks' involvement with coaches and buses after some thirty years of business, but the name continued with Hamblin's who further developed the motor sales aspect of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd.

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(Including Lunch and Tea Saturday and Bed and
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DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING
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LUXURY COACHES

BOOK YOUR SEATS WITHOUT DELAY AT—

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JIM KNIGHT, Church Parade
CRAXTON'S, 207, Wellingborough Road
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A facsimile of one of Seamarks (Motors) Ltd excursion advertisements that appeared in the Rushden Echo & Argus of 8th September 1950.

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An unidentified coach belonging to Seamarks (Motors) Ltd photographed on a Works outing of the Ivy Boot & Shoe factory, Higham Ferrers circa 1949/50.

The identity of the above vehicle has now been established as the Arthur Mulliner bodied Albion Victor registered NV 8987 shown on page 9 of paper NN-SE2. This suggests that this coach may have either returned from the Westoning fleet to Rushden in the early post-War years or may have been on short-term loan from Westoning.

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
11	TY 9518	A.E.C.	Regal	6621347	1.Robson	32	4934?	4/32	4/47	-/52	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	Wargate Motors, Rushden	1
	GF 1736	A.E.C.	Regal	662098	2.E.C.W. Harrington	C31R C32D		3/30	4/47	4/47	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	?	
	UU 3171	T.S.M.	B10A	5380	Wilton	FB32C	5/29	4/47	5/50	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	?		
6	CNV 668	Bedford	OB	11096	Duple	B32F	41535	4/46	4/47	5/47	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	Marshall, Riseley	2
	DBD 72	A.E.C.	Regal	6621856	Duple (1946)	C33F		4/36	4/47	10/49	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	Lepley, East Kirkby	
	AWR 756	Dennis	Lancet	170931	Dennis	C31F		4/35	4/47	6/51	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	Penfold (Showman) Bugbrooke	
7	AWT 621	Dennis	Lancet	170847	Spicer	C31C		4/35	4/47	4/47	Rushden Motors Ltd, Rushden	Judge, Luton	
	RF 9838	Dennis	Lancet	170194	Duple	C32F	6236(2)	6/32	by 11/47	7/51	H & H, Coventry (Bunty)	Coles, Luton	
16	VH 4873	A.E.C.	Regal	6621445	Burlingham	B35F (1941)		1/33	1/48	-/50	Hanson, Huddersfield	Jones & Allen, Corby	
15	VH 4874	A.E.C.	Regal	6621446	Burlingham	B35F (1941)		1/33	1/48	-/50	Hanson, Huddersfield	Jones & Allen, Corby	
17	VH 4576	A.E.C.	Regal	6621389	Burlingham	B35F (1941)		7/32	1/48	by -/50	Hanson, Huddersfield	Brindley, Thornfield	
	JU 4282	A.E.C.	Regal	6621562	Willowbrook	C32F	2700	5/34	4/50	11/51	Pole & Son, Syston	Bannister, Owston Ferry	
	ETO 515	Dennis	Lancet II	175433	Duple	DP39F	4978(2)	3/38	5/50	by 2/53	Skill, Nottingham	Gee & Harrison, Whittington	
	CDT 197	Guy	Arab 5LW	FD25607	Massey	H30/26R	C1367	11/42	-/50	-/52	Doncaster Corpn. (82)	Garralon Haulage, Salsburgh	
	GJF 607	Dennis	Lancet III	110J10A	Yeates	FC37F	215	10/50	—	by 6/53	—	Hemmings, Pensnett	
	GRY 132	Dennis	Lancet III	659J3	Yeates	C35F	135	1/50	-/51?	2/52	Clayton, Leicester	Ellis, Bedford	
	GNV 806	Dennis	Lancet III	135J10C	Yeates	C37F	252	5/51	—	by 2/54	—	Farrow, Melton Mowbray	
	GNV 978	Dennis	Lancet III	122J10C	Yeates	FC37F	243	6/51	—	-/54	—	?	
	KRO 658	Austin	CXB	139984	Thurgood	C29F	575	8/49	10/52	-/54	Jones & Allen, Corby	A1 Service, Ardrossan	

NOTES: 1 - TY 9518 was rebodied by Seamarks with an E.C.W.body ex-Irthlingborough circa 5/51. It is believed the body was 4934 from United Counties' 471 - NV 6639.
2 - AWR 756 resealed C32F by 1/49.

STOCK NO.	REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL	NOTES
		MAKE	TYPE	NUMBER	MAKE	TYPE & SEATS	NUMBER	NEW	S/H	W/D			
HBD 546		Bedford	SB	7738	Duple Vega	C33F	1021/8	3/52	—	by 9/54	—	Cote, Hevingham	
HBD 747		Dennis	Falcon	150L6	Yeates	FC35F	296	4/52	—	by 10/54	—	Back's Coaches, Witney	
AAU 506		Dennis	Lancet	170566	Willowbrook	C35F	2663	3/34	7/52	4/55	Skill, Nottingham	Broken up	
NTW 706		Bedford	OB	89535		C29F	46511	12/48	1/53	2/53	McLeod, Market Harborough	White, Little Milton	
JJF 672		Bedford	SB	14598	Duple Mk.V Yeates	C35F	354	4/53	—	by 10/54	—	Back's Coaches, Witney	
KBD 14		Bedford	SBG	26358	Riviera	C38F	1051/27	-/54	—	by 4/54	—	Rugby Co-op Soc., Rugby	
PRR 72		Bedford	SBG	27764	Duple Vega	C36F	1051/112	3/54	—	4/55	—	York Bros., Northampton	
KNV 217		Bedford	SBO	28481	Duple Vega	C38F	1051/180	-/54	—	4/55	—	York Bros., Northampton	
ERP 393		Maudslay	Marathon III	70371	Duple Vega Whitson	C33F		3/49	4/54	4/55	Abbott, Gt.Doddington	Diiks, Desborough/Walker, Wellingboro'	
KRP 688		Commer	Avenger II	44A5012		C41F	1057/1	9/54	—	4/55	—	Irthlingborough Co-op Society	
CUX 465		Bedford	OWB	31176	Duple Vega Duple MK.II	B30F	41438	11/45	3/55	4/55	Errington, Evington/Measham Motor Sales	Marriott, Rushden	
<p>From PSV Circle Publication PG14 - Red & White Services Ltd - Part 1 (1926-1946) it would appear that the undermentioned vehicle passed to Seamarks although the dates quoted have not been verified.</p>													
TG 9953		A.E.C.	Q	0762040	Berw	B39F	—	4/35	-/48	by 12/50	Dunstable Coaches Ltd, Dunstable	Scrapped	

NOTES: 1 - PRR 72 was diverted from C W Blankley (Gem Luxury Coaches), Colsterworth.
 TMV 497 a Leyland Tiger PS1 481364 with Duple 48603 body new in 11/48 was also in the fleet at dates unknown.