

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-CH3  
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## CHECKLEY, William

### The Firs

## BRIXWORTH

Information concerning William Checkley is sparse, but he was one of the earlier Northamptonshire bus operators, who inaugurated services during the First World War. The initial indication of Checkley's activities came with an announcement in the Northampton Daily Chronicle for Saturday 20th March 1915, which revealed his intention to commence a motor service between Brixworth and Northampton on Wednesdays and Saturdays, leaving Brixworth at 10.00am and 1.30pm, returning from Northampton at 1.00pm and 5.30pm. On Fridays a return trip from Brixworth to Kettering was proposed.

The date of the Daily Chronicle advertisement suggests that William Checkley either started, or intended to start, his bus service on the following Wednesday - 24th March 1915. Whether or not he did so is uncertain as a new twenty-horsepower Scout motor vehicle bearing the index mark BD 2618, with a convertible van and passenger body painted Napier green, was not registered to Checkley until 14th April 1915. He may, of course, have owned a vehicle prior to this date but, if so, no details have come to light. William Checkley may also have terminated his service in Northampton at a public house yard, the Cross Keys in Sheep Street being a popular terminus for services entering town from the north. However, he applied to Northampton Borough Council Watch Committee for permission to stand his motor bus at Regent Square and was granted a Hackney Carriage Licence from 17th May 1915. Similarly, Checkley applied to Kettering Urban District Council to ply for hire in Kettering and was duly granted the appropriate licence on 23rd June 1915. At the same time Checkley was granted both driving and conducting licences by Kettering U.D.C. and Harold Reeve and Harry Crisp, both of Brixworth, were respectively granted driver's and conductor's licences.

It is assumed that William Checkley operated the usual range of private hires and that on days on which BD 2618 was not required for passenger services, its seats were removed and the vehicle was used for the carriage of goods.

William Checkley's business must have prospered as on 18th December 1915 another vehicle was added to the fleet. This was a 30 horsepower Whiting-Denby which was again basically a covered lorry into which around sixteen forward-facing seats could be fitted when it was required for bus operations. This vehicle, registered BD 3204, was

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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again painted green. Messrs Whiting (1915) Ltd of London imported vehicles and marketed several United States-built trucks in this country under its own name. Those constructed by the Denby Truck Company of Detroit was one such vehicle Whiting promoted and, by good fortune, the example supplied to William Checkley can be illustrated.



*BD 3204 was one of only two Whiting-Denbys known to the Author to have been supplied to a Northamptonshire operator and it is seen here at Kennel Terrace, Brixworth in its "bus" form, with sixteen forward-facing seats at the rear and, no doubt, another two passengers could have ridden with the driver.*

Messrs Frank Newton Ltd of St Giles' Garage, Northampton supplied William Checkley with his second Whiting-Denby in March 1917 when NH 1900 was registered but this is recorded in Motor Tax records as being a grey lorry and was not apparently licensed as a public conveyance.

Just one other bus is known to have been operated by William Checkley and this was a 1910 Wolseley 16/20hp vehicle which was transferred from Leicestershire to Checkley on 22nd November 1918 and was used as a public conveyance.

References to William Checkley's operations in the Minutes of Kettering Urban District Council and Northampton Watch Committees cease in 1917 and 1918 respectively so it

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is assumed that Checkley's bus services finished around the time of the end of the First World War. Checkley may have continued to carry goods after this time as BD 2618, at least, was still licensed in 1921.

#### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
							New	S/H	W/D			
BD 2618	Scout	20hp	?	?	Lorry/ Bus		4/15	—	?	—		1
BD 3204	Whiting-Denby	30hp	?	?	Lorry/ B18R		12/15	—	?	—		
NH 1900	Whiting-Denby	30hp	?	?	Lorry		3/17	—	?	Supp F Newton Ltd, N'pton		2
AY 1452	Wolseley	16/ 20hp	?	?	Lorry Bus		7/10	11/18	?	?		

**Notes:** 1 - Still licensed in 1921.

2 - Not recorded as being used as a public conveyance.