# KERR. Percy William
# 177 Rockingham Road
# KETTERING

It would be interesting to know more about Percy Kerr as he was a very early operator of motor transport in connection with his Kettering based business which was principally that of a carrier and furniture remover. Kerr originally occupied premises at 8 Upper Duke Street, but had moved the short distance to 177 Rockingham Road, Kettering, opposite its junction with Charles Street, either by late 1913 or early 1914.

The Author has no information to pinpoint when Percy Kerr commenced business but believes it to have been within the first few years of the 1900s. The first official reference to Percy Kerr that has been found comes from the Minutes of Kettering Urban District Council's Streets, Buildings and Sanitary Committee of 1st June 1910 when Percy was granted a driver's licence. The vehicle he bought, in May 1910, was a Karrier 20 horsepower lorry which was registered as CX 655 in Huddersfield, where Karriers were built. Kerr quickly put this machine to use on a carrier's service between Kettering and Northampton on a "daily" basis, which most likely meant Mondays to Saturdays. At other times and on Sundays his lorry was fitted with cross-bench seats and used for passenger outings. In the following year Percy Kerr acquired a second similar Karrier which bore the registration CX 679 and was presumably secondhand at the time of purchase.



*This photograph of CX 655 and that of CX 679 on the next page appeared in the trade press in February 1912. In this view CX 655 is in use as an excursion vehicle, fitted with cross-bench seating and a rear access ladder. (Photo courtesy Commercial Motor).*

*By contrast this photograph depicts Karrier CX 679 at work on the Kettering to Northampton freight route*

*(Photo courtesy Commercial Motor).*





*What a cracking photograph of Karrier CX 655 with a huge load of furniture! Karriers for Carriers" as the adverts of the time read.* *(Photo courtesy Geoff Lumb collection).*

## KERR. Percy William - KETTERING

By September 1912 Percy Kerr had purchased another interesting lorry-cum-bus. This was a machine built by the Thames Ironworks, Shipbuilding & Engineering Co Ltd of Milwall, London and it was registered BD 1551 and used both as a lorry and as a bus by Percy Kerr.



*This splendid photograph of the Thames lorry/bus registered BD 1551 and fitted with longitudinal seating was engaged on a hire and photographed at Market Harborough. The Commer at the rear, registered BD 1314, was owned by W Valentine & Sons of Wellingborough.*

**KERR'S MOTOR**
For NORTHAMPTON, WHIT-MONDAY.
Leave Kettering Market-hill 9 a.m. sharp.
Returning from Northampton Abingdon-square, 11 p.m.
1s. 6d. Return.

SANDY SHOW.

**KERR'S MOTOR**
WILL RUN ON THURSDAY.
A few seats vacant.    Booked only.
3s. 6d. return.
8, UPPER DUKE STREET, KETTERING.

**KERR'S MOTOR**
Will run to TOWCESTER on THURSDAY, JUNE 5th.
Leaves Kettering 10.30 a.m., Towcester 8.30 p.m.
Return Fare, 2s. 6d.

*Three advertisements placed by Percy Kerr in the Kettering Evening Telegraph during 1913.*
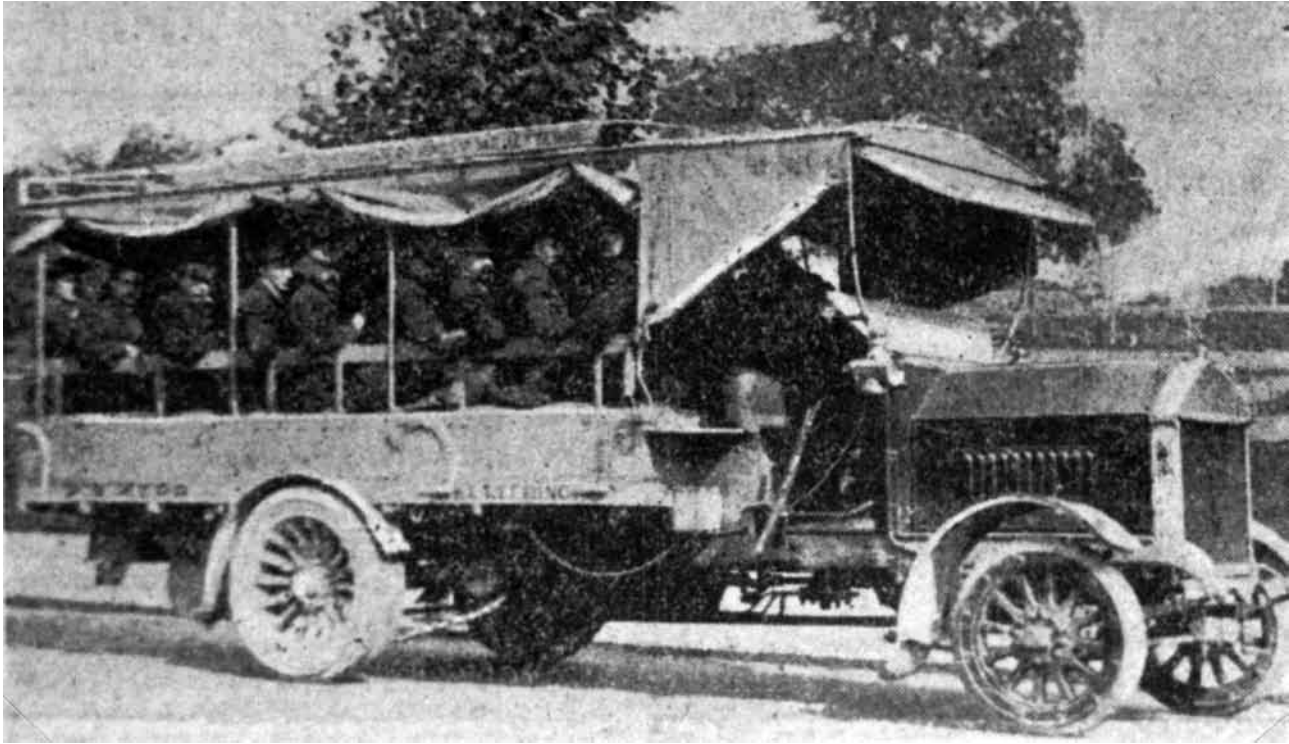
*An off-side view of Thames BD 1551, again well loaded with passengers, was taken in September 1912.*                    *(Photo courtesy Wellingborough News).*

With the onset of the First World War, one of Percy Kerr's Karriers - CX 679 - passed to Messrs Barfield & Coles of Long Buckby (NN-BA4) who continued to use it for the carriage of both goods and passengers. However, CX 679 was soon replaced in Kerr's fleet by a Thornycroft which collected the registration BD 2633 in December 1914 and, like its precursors, carried a dual-purpose lorry/bus type body.

As far as it has been discovered, very little passenger work was undertaken during the War and it was not until 1920 that excursions were reintroduced for the summer period. No doubt the Thornycroft BD 2633 was used initially, until August 1920, when another dual-purpose Thornycroft X-type was purchased and registered BD 4966. This vehicle is believed to have seated twenty-four passengers.



KERR'S NEW MOTOR
## TRIAL CIRCULAR RUN,
SUNDAY NEXT,
At 2 and 6. P.M.
Book now at Rockingham road Kettering.

*Kerr's advertisement in the Kettering Evening Telegraph in August 1920 shows that the arrival of Thornycroft BD 4966 heralded a trial circular tour.*

*This picture illustrates Kerr's Thornycroft X registered BD 4966 with its lorry/bus body which apparently accommodated some two dozen passengers. A sturdy looking machine with roll-down covers for the window areas at times of inclement weather. The photograph was taken outside 177 Rockingham Road, which is the house on the extreme left. To the left of Percy Kerr's house was access to a large garage at the rear of these premises.*

The carriage of goods and furniture removals undoubtedly earned Percy Kerr the bulk of his income but private hires and excursions continued to be operated throughout the 1920s. After the above mentioned Thornycroft, subsequent charabancs or coaches were bespoke passenger vehicles rather than the lorry-bus types hitherto utilised. A fourteen seat Ford TT was bought for the 1921 season and in the following year it is believed that Percy Kerr bought a second-hand Leyland charabanc from Messrs Luck & Andrew Ltd of Kettering (NN-LU2) which company ceased operating passengers vehicles at this time. The vehicle in question was BD 2284 which seated twenty-nine whilst with Luck & Andrew but was advertised as a twenty-eight seater by Percy Kerr.

BD 7491, another Ford, was bought in 1923 but it seems almost certain that this was a lorry rather than a bus. March 1926 saw the arrival of a Chevrolet R-type, this time a saloon omnibus registered RP 2344. More passenger vehicles were bought in 1927 and 1930 respectively when Chevrolets LM and LQ types were acquired. The first was fitted with a 14-seat charabanc body and registered RP 4457 whilst the second was equipped with an all-weather body and was allocated the registration RP 8379. This latter vehicle was supplied by Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton and could well have been bodied by this firm.

Meanwhile, the usual run of excursions were advertised each year, with 8 or 10-day holiday trips to Yarmouth and Clacton. Other frequently advertised destinations were Skegness, Leamington, Stratford-on-Avon, Hunstanton and Charnwood Forest. Incidentally, Percy Kerr also operated taxis and provided hire cars.

The introduction of the 1930 Road Traffic Act caused Percy Kerr to apply to the Traffic Commissioners in October 1931 for a licence to operate excursions and tours from Kettering, Rockingham Road. A total of 45 tours were documented, including those of 10-day's duration to Bournemouth, Margate and Southsea, with the licence being duly granted by the Commissioners. For the rest of the decade the licence was adjusted only marginally, with a few additional tours being applied for and granted from time to time. The livery of Percy Kerr's vehicles, whether for goods or passenger traffic, was red and from 1923 onwards his charabancs were advertised as "Kerr's Red Cars". By the early 1930s Percy Kerr's vehicles were becoming a bit dated in comparison with those of some other operators and for the 1932 season Kerr invested in a new "Parlour Coach". This turned out to be a Bedford WLB registered NV 1349 and supplied by Grose Ltd of Northampton, probably with a body built by the supplier.

'Phone 382.

# KERR'S New Parlour Coach

### FOR YOUR SUMMER OUTING.
### Comfort. Convenience. Safety.
### HALF-DAY TRIPS:

**Saturday Next: ——————— BEDFORD.**

**Sunday Next: CHARNWOOD FOREST.**

177, Rockingham-road, Kettering.

*Percy Kerr quickly promoted his "Parlour Coach" as is evident from this facsimile of an advertisement placed in the Kettering Evening Telegraph in May 1932.*

By February 1937 Percy Kerr had decided to replace his 1932 Bedford WLB registered NV 1349 with a new similar, but slightly larger, Bedford WLB coach. Accordingly he traded in the older vehicle to Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton in part exchange for NV 8777 which was again a WLB model Bedford but with a Grose twenty-five seat body. NV 1349 soon found its way to William Rice of Wollaston (NN-RI2) for further use on excursion work.

*NV8777, a Grose bodied Bedford WLB, was new to Percy Kerr in February 1937, passing to Harry Buckby of Rothwell circa 1941 and to Leslie Adams in 1945. It was in the latter operator's possession when photographed.*

As it happened, NV 8777 was the final coach to be bought by Percy Kerr who continued in business until he was prevented from operating excursions following the onset of the Second World War. Whilst uncertain, it seems most likely that Harry Buckby of Rothwell (NN-BU1) purchased NV 8777 from Percy Kerr either late in 1940 or early in 1941 and with it the goodwill of Kerr's excursion licence which was by then effectively in limbo.

It is also possible that Percy Kerr had reached retirement age at about this same time, but personal details of this operator are not available to the Author. Certainly both NV 8777 and an excursion licence for tours starting from Kettering, Rockingham Road passed from Harry Buckby to Leslie Adams (NN-AD2)) when the latter acquired Harry Buckby's business in 1945. Uncertainties, therefore, will persist about the precise course of events in the Percy Kerr/Harry Buckby story for the time being.

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*Since the publication of this paper the photograph alongside has become available and depicts Kerr's Bedford WLB registered NV 1349.*

| STOCK NO. | REGN. NO. | CHASSIS | | | BODY | | | DATES | | | PREVIOUS OWNER | INITIAL DISPOSAL | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | MAKE | TYPE | NUMBER | MAKE | TYPE & SEATS | NUMBER | NEW | S/H | W/D | | | |
| | CX 655 | Karrier | 20hp | ? | ? | Lorry/ Bus 28 | — | 5/10 | — | ? | | ? | |
| | CX 679 | Karrier | 20hp | ? | ? | Lorry/ Bus 28 | — | c8/10 | by 8/11 | by 9/14 | | C Barfield, L Buckby | |
| | BD 1551 | Thames | | ? | ? | Lorry/ Bus 20+ | — | by 9/12 | — | 6/17? | | | |
| | BD 2633 | Thornycroft | 16/20hp | 1785 | ? | Lorry/ Chara | — | 12/14 | — | by 12/24 | — | | 1 |
| | BD 4966 | Thornycroft | X | 8482 | ? | Lorry/ Chara | — | 8/20 | — | by 12/34 | — | Bagshaw & Sons, Kettering | 2 |
| | BD 5925 | Ford | TT | 4123027 | ? | B14 | — | 4/21 | — | 7/28 | — | No further owner | |
| | BD 2284 | Leyland | ? | 21650? | ? | CH28 | — | 7/21 | c4/22 | by 7/30 | Luck & Andrew Ltd, Kettering | | 3 |
| | BD 7491 | Ford | TT | 6493400 | ? | Lorry? | — | 3/23 | — | 12/30 | Supp. York, Ward & Rowlatt, W'borough | No further owner | |
| | RP 2344 | Chevrolet | R | 6274T | ? | B | — | 3/26 | — | 3/33 | Supp. Central Motor Company, Kettering | No further owner | |
| | RP 4457 | Chevrolet | LM | 15991 | ? | Ch14 | — | 5/27 | — | 12/35 | — | No further owner | |
| | RP 8379 | Chevrolet | LQ | 60345 | Grose ? | AW | — | 2/30 | — | by 12/38 | Supp. Grose Ltd, Northampton | | 4 |
| | NV 1349 | Bedford | WLB | 108527 | Grose ? | B20F | | 5/32 | — | 2/37 | Supp. Grose Ltd, Northampton | W M Rice, Wollaston | 5 |
| | NV 8777 | Bedford | WLB | 110936 | Grose | C25F | — | 2/37 | — | c-/41 | Supp. Grose Ltd, Northampton | H Buckby, Rothwell | |

**Notes: 1** - BD 2633 last owned by E Beaver, Kempshott, Basingstoke and last licensed 12/24.
    **2** - BD 4966 last licensed by Bagshaw & Sons as a goods vehicle 12/34.
    **3** - BD 2284 last licensed by W Senior & Son, Pendleton and last licensed 7/30.
    **4** - RP 8379 last owner by Allcock's Garage, Brackley and last licensed 12/38.
    **5** - NV1349 last licensed by Rice 12/37.