

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-CL1

Page 1

CLARK. Thomas Henry

31 Market Hill

ROTHWELL

It seems that Thomas Henry Clark originated from Newton Harcourt in Leicestershire and moved to Rothwell in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. In Northamptonshire Thomas Clark established himself as a carrier but whether or not he started with horse-drawn transport is unknown to the Author. What is clear, however, is that he bought an Argyll twenty-horsepower lorry which he had registered on 9th April 1913 as BD 1913, although the vehicle was apparently built in 1912. This lorry had a permanently covered top fitted with a roof rack and canvas sheeting that could be furled and unfurled as required to protect the load being carried.



This photograph of Argyll BD 1913 shows T H Clark's lorry / bus standing in Market Hill, Rothwell outside the Methodist Church, probably in 1913. The advertising board on the roof of the vehicle reads "T H Clark & Co. Carriers. Rothwell • Desborough • Market Harborough • Monday, Wednesday, Friday • To Leicester, Swan with two Necks, Granby Street. In this view BD 1913 is fitted with longitudinal bench seating, access to which was presumably gained via a ladder at the rear.

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.

CLARK. Thomas Henry - ROTHWELL

As mentioned on the previous page, the headboard on BD 1913 indicates that Clark operated his carrier's service to Leicester on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays but no mention is made of Tuesdays, Thursdays and possibly Saturdays unless the corresponding board on the offside of the vehicle carried this information.

Within a few weeks of acquiring his Argyll, Thomas Clark applied to the Streets, Buildings & Sanitary Committee of Kettering Urban District Council for a licence for a Motor Omnibus and for a driver's licence for himself. The Council recommended the grant of both licences at its meeting of 28th May 1913 subject to the inspection of the vehicle being satisfactory to the Council's Inspector. There is no reason to believe the Argyll was not satisfactory and thus Thomas Henry Clark became one of Northamptonshire's first bus operators. No evidence has been seen to indicate that Clark provided regular bus services but he ran on an occasional or excursion basis to Kettering and Northampton at least and possibly to Desborough. With only one motor vehicle Clark's service must have been quite limited.

ROTHWELL.

MR. CLARKE

Will run his MOTOR for PASSENGERS to
NORTHAMPTON.
On THURSDAY and SUNDAY NEXT, May
1st and 4th.

THURSDAY:
Leave Market-hill, Rothwell, at 2 p.m.
Leave New White Horse, Kettering, 2.30.

SUNDAY:
Leave Rothwell at 11.30 a.m.
Leave Kettering at 12 o'clock.

Returning each night from the Bull Hotel,
Northampton, at 9.15 p.m.

KETTERING FEAST.

CLARK'S MOTOR

Will leave ROTHWELL on SUNDAY at 10.30
a.m., 1.30 p.m., and 4.30 p.m.
Return dinner time, New White Horse, 12.30.
Will also run Saturday, Sunday, and Monday
night.

Two of T H Clark's early advertisements placed in the Evening Telegraph, that on the left appearing in April 1913 and that above in June 1913. The typesetter erroneously added an "E" to Clark's name in the former display.

A little over two years after purchasing his first motor vehicle Thomas Clark bought a second Argyll lorry when BD 3079 was registered on 21st August 1915. As far as it is known this vehicle was solely used for the conveyance of goods and was never licensed as a public conveyance.

There is every reason to suppose that Thomas Clark continued his passenger carrying activities throughout the first World War and beyond, using his Argyll BD 1913, a vehicle that was retained by Clark for over twenty years, albeit as a goods vehicle only in latter years. The Kettering Urban District Council again issued a licence to Clark for one omnibus in December 1917 and January 1919. However, at the Council's meeting on 28th January 1920 Clark was issued licences for two omnibuses. In this same month, January 1920, Thomas Clark acquired a 40hp Thornycroft charabanc which could accommodate up to twenty-eight passengers. This machine was registered BD 4033 on 24th January 1920.

CLARK. Thomas Henry - ROTHWELL



This interesting photograph taken at Market Hill, Rothwell shows Clark's Argyll lorry BD 3079. Details painted on the vehicle now show that Clark undertook removals and was a general carrier to Kettering, Northampton and Leicester. The lorry is loaded with crates and baskets and in the background can be seen Clark's original garage. The occasion on which the photograph was taken is said to have been an Alexandra Rose Day fete, although the same halberds or ceremonial wands were used at Rothwell's Charter Fairs.

The colours in which Thomas Clark's vehicles were painted is open to conjecture. BD 1913 when new was recorded as being green but was later noted as being blue. BD 3079 similarly started life grey but later became brown. BD 4033 however was noted only as being blue. There are also reports of Clark's passenger vehicles carrying names with BD 1913 suggested as "Bluebell" and BD 4033 as "Forget-me-not".

As far as is known T H Clark operated only the two passenger vehicles mentioned in the text above. Clark was still operating in July 1921 as the Kettering Council considered taking proceedings against him in respect of overloading his omnibus and it is believed that he continued until the mid-1920s.

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-CL1

Page 4

CLARK. Thomas Henry - ROTHWELL



Clark's Thornycroft charabanc BD 4033 was photographed in July 1920 with a full compliment of passengers. No low-floor buses then, but the elderly still managed to get aboard, probably not without difficulty!



Another picture of Thornycroft BD 4033 with Sam Sanders at the wheel. This latter gentleman was described as "Motor Transport Manager" and his name was painted at the bottom of the panel in line with the driver's row of seats.

CLARK. Thomas Henry - ROTHWELL

The haulage side of Clark's business flourished and in October 1935 a company named T H Clark (Rothwell) Ltd was formed. This company acquired the businesses of other local hauliers including Barfield's of Long Buckby, Briggs Bros of Wellingborough, Dainty of Geddington and Hamson of Brixworth being amongst them. The firm of T H Clark (Rothwell) Ltd continued to develop significantly and large premises were erected in Kettering Road, Rothwell. Many handsome lorries were operated and after the War the firm was absorbed into British Road Services.

I am grateful to Mrs Mary Pittam for the loan of photographs.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
BD 1913	Argyll	20hp			Lorry/ bus	—	4/13	—	12/33	—	No further owner	
BD 3079	Argyll				Lorry	—	8/15	—	12/33	—		
BD 4033	Thornycroft	40hp	58365		Lorry/ Ch28	—	1/20	—	?	—		1

Notes: 1 - BD 4033 last owned by Nene Valley Sand & Gravel Co as a lorry and last licensed 7/36.

Passenger vehicles are said to have been named, with BD 1913 possibly "Bluebell" and BD 4033 possibly "Forget-me-not".