

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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RICE. William Mascall 2 Park Street WOLLASTON

William Mascall Rice was born at Wollaston in 1883 and in due course worked in the shoe trade. Later, presumably following demobilisation from the armed forces, he bought a Ford T box van on 5th October 1921 which was registered BD 6141. It was painted green and William Rice installed seating inside and carried passengers between Wollaston and Wellingborough for 5d return. Although the vehicle was basically a van, William Rice did not at first carry goods but later developed a delivery service in the Wollaston area. William's son - Alfred Rice - who drove for his father but was not engaged in the business, recalls that timetables were not printed in the early days and tickets were not issued. His father apparently just waited at the Nag's Head at Wollaston for his vehicle to fill sufficiently and would then proceed to Wellingborough.



At an unknown date between October 1921 and February 1927 William Rice acquired a secondhand charabanc for excursion and private hire work but no details of this machine have come to light. However, on 1st February 1927 it is understood that Rice traded in his Ford T registered BD 6141 for a REO bus supplied by Messrs Allchin & Son of Northampton. This vehicle, which may have seated either fourteen or twenty passengers, was registered RP 3700.

The vehicle in the centre of this photograph is REO, RP 3700, with William Rice leaning on its nearside mudguard. To the left is Fred Abbott of Great Doddington with his G.M.C. registered RP 8163. William Rice and Fred Abbott worked closely together over the years and enjoyed a good working relationship, assisting each other as necessary.

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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William Rice's local service from Wollaston and Irchester Turn to Wellingborough probably operated on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only in the early 1920s but eventually weekday evening journeys were added. By the time the Road Traffic Act of 1930 came into force William Rice applied to the Traffic Commissioners for two licences. The first was for the stage-carriage route between Wollaston and Wellingborough and the second was for an Excursions & Tours licence starting from Wollaston Nag's Head, with destinations to Skegness, Hunstanton, Clacton and Yarmouth together with Northampton Football Matches and a general clause to cover special events. Both licences were granted in November 1931 and later given the Traffic Commissioners' references TER 1282/1 and 1282/2. Over the course of the ensuing years various additional destinations were added to the Excursions licence until fifteen tours were authorised, most of which were also permitted to take up passengers at Wellingborough Cannon Street from 1933 onwards.

Returning for a moment to William Rice's rolling stock, a new Bedford WLB with twenty-seat Grose bodywork was added to the fleet on 30th June 1932 when NV 1491 was registered and this may well have replaced the charabanc bought in the mid-1920s. The fleet was then increased to three vehicles in 1933 or 1934 when a secondhand Bedford WLB was acquired from Percy Kerr of Kettering. This machine had been new to Kerr in May 1932 as NV 1349. The livery of Rice's buses was blue and white.



The rear of the Grose bodied Bedford WLB registered NV 1491 can be seen in this view taken in later life whilst in the ownership of Denis Judd of Byfield who bought it in 1946. It was photographed during the severe winter of 1947.

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By March 1933 William Rice's Wollaston, Nag's Head to Wellingborough, Cannon Street bus service was running to the following timetable:-

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday -

Depart Wollaston: 5.58 pm; 9.30 pm (TuTh only).
Depart Wellingborough: 8.45 pm; 10.00 pm (TuTh only).

Wednesday -

Depart Wollaston: 10.00 am; 11.00 am; 1.20 pm; 2.20 pm; 4.05 pm; 5.58 pm;
7.05 pm; 9.15 pm.
Depart Wellingborough: 10.30 am; 12.00 pm; 1.55 pm; 3.45 pm; 4.25 pm; 6.30 pm;
8.45 pm; 10.00 pm.

Saturday -

Depart Wollaston: 10.00 am; 11.20 am; 1.25 pm; 2.05 pm; 2.50 pm; 3.30 pm;
4.10 pm; 4.50 pm; 5.30 pm; 6.10 pm; 6.50 pm; 7.30 pm;
8.10 pm; 9.05 pm; 9.50 pm; 10.30 pm.
Depart Wellingborough: 10.50 am; 11.50 am; 1.45 pm; 2.25 pm; 3.10 pm; 3.50 pm;
4.30 pm; 5.10 pm; 5.50 pm; 6.30 pm; 7.10 pm; 7.50 pm;
8.40 pm; 9.30 pm; 10.10 pm; 11.00 pm.

Sunday -

Depart Wollaston: 5.20 pm; 6.10 pm; 6.50 pm; 7.30 pm; 8.10 pm; 9.05 pm;
9.45 pm.
Depart Wellingborough: 5.40 pm; 6.30 pm; 7.10 pm; 7.50 pm; 8.40 pm; 9.25 pm;
10.05 pm.

United Counties, who already ran a frequent service on its Wellingborough - Wollaston - Bozeat - Olney service, was naturally keen to eliminate William Rice from this route and in October 1934 entered into an agreement with William Rice to purchase the Goodwill of his stage-carriage service for the sum of £800 and his Bedford WLB registered NV 1491 for a further £400. The Traffic Commissioners approved the transfer of route to United Counties with effect from 28th October 1934.

William Rice was keen to continue with his excursions and private hire business and retained his REO registered RP 3700 and Bedford WLB registered NV 1349 for this purpose. At this time he was also still operating a delivery service in the Wollaston area and additionally ran a taxi.

By the end of the 1934 season the aging REO was past its best as a passenger vehicle, so William Rice decided to replace it with a new Bedford WLB in the following spring. Arrangements were made with Messrs Grose Ltd of Northampton to both supply the Bedford chassis and to fit it with a twenty-seat body. When complete in March 1935 this machine was registered NV 5108.

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Messrs Grose Ltd usually designed attractive bodywork and that fitted to NV 5108, a Bedford WLB, was no exception. Although used for private hire and excursions it will be seen that the seats were of the low-backed variety rather than of a more luxurious type so often fitted to coaches.



A rear view of the Grose bodied Bedford WLB registered NV 5108 complete with roof rack and access steps. Note the Traffic Commissioners' oval licence plate at the rear which had to be affixed to PSVs in the pre-War period. This particular plate depicts a crown, the licence number 1691 and a letter "E" signifying the East Midland Traffic Area.

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Three years later William Rice replaced NV 1349, the Bedford WLB he had obtained secondhand from Percy Kerr of Kettering, with a new Bedford WTB chassis supplied by Messrs Yeates of Loughborough and fitted with a twenty-six seat Duple body. This coach took the registration ANV 43 on 1st May 1938.



This newspaper photograph taken in September 1938 shows a party of employees of R Griggs & Co, Wollaston Shoe Manufacturers, on a trip to Southend-on-Sea. William Rice can be seen on the left of the picture taken during a break at Epping Forest and a second coach may be seen through the windows of the one in the foreground. The visible coach is clearly not NV 5108 and it is not large enough to be ANV 43. In any case it appears to have a Burlingham body so possibly William Rice had another machine for which details are unknown?

The operation of private hires and excursions carried on until 1940 when Wartime conditions prevented continuation. As far as the Author can ascertain, William Rice did not resume coach operation after the War but in September 1948 sold the Goodwill of his Excursions & Tours licence to nearby Great Doddington operator Fred Abbott. At this time the Licence permitted the operation of fifteen tours, as indeed it had before the War. The destinations were: - *Period excursions* - Yarmouth; *Day excursions* - Brampton Races, Clacton, Hunstanton, Skegness; *Half-Day excursions* - Bedford, Huntingdon, Leicester, Northampton, Whipsnade Zoo, Wicksteed Park; *Evening excursions* - Bedford, Corby, Fenny Stratford and Old Warden.

Although sixty-five years of age at the time William Rice sold the Goodwill of his Licence to Fred Abbott, he continued to run his taxi for a year or two but died in 1965.

RICE. William Mascall - WOLLASTON

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
BD 6141	Ford	TT	4662317	?	Van/ Bus	—	10/21	—	by 4/31	—		1
?	?	?	?	?	Chara	—	?	c -/25?	c 6/32?	?		2
RP 3700	REO		143622	?	B	—	2/27	—	c 3/35	Supp. Allchin & Son, Northampton		3
NV 1491	Bedford	WLB	108611	Grose	B20F	—	6/32	—	10/34	Supp. Grose Ltd., Northampton	United Counties (400)	
NV 1349	Bedford	WLB	108527	?	20	—	5/32	c -/34	12/37	Kerr, Kettering	No further owner	
NV 5108	Bedford	WLB	109960	Grose	B20F	—	3/35	—	-/40?	Supp. Grose Ltd., Northampton		4
?	?	?	?	Burling- ham	C20F	?	-/37?		?	?	?	5
ANV 43	Bedford	WTB	112272	Duple	C26F	3804	5/38	—	-/40?	Supp. Yeates, Loughborough	Ellis & Bull, Moreton-in-Marsh	6

- Notes:**
- 1 - BD 6141 last owned by H Locke, Northampton and last licensed 4/31.
 - 2 - No details of this charabanc are known.
 - 3 - RP 3700 last owned by F Boswell, Wellingborough and last licensed 6/38.
 - 4 - NV 5108 last owned by A Dodman, Newcastleton and last licensed 6/57.
 - 5 - The photograph on page 5 suggests Rice may have owned a Burlingham bodied coach.
 - 6 - ANV 43 last owned by Mrs E M Weedon, Liverpool and last licensed as a goods vehicle 1/61.