

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-KE2
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KEARSLEY Bros.

Archibald Oswald & Reginald H

34 North End

HIGHAM FERRERS

The Kearsley family was well known in transport circles in Northamptonshire in the earlier and middle parts of the twentieth century, mainly for their involvement in the road haulage business.

John and Annie Kearsley of Finedon had four children of whom Oswald was the eldest and Reginald the youngest. A colourful story is told that Oswald Kearsley deserted from the Army during the first World War but the authorities caught up with him on the outskirts of Higham Ferrers and chased him to Irthlingborough. With Police blocking the far end of Irthlingborough bridge, the army officer in charge shouted to Kearsley - "Got you now!", with which Oswald jumped over the bridge parapet and into the river below, swimming off and escaping. The incident seems to have done Oswald no harm and, if true, the matter appears to have been overlooked by the military authorities.

After the first World War, probably late in 1920, Oswald Kearsley persuaded his younger brother Reginald to join him the operation of a bus service. The vehicle said to have been acquired was an ex-War Department Thornycroft double-decker which was used on a service from Rushden via Higham Ferrers to Irthlingborough in competition with the Wellingborough Motor Omnibus Co Ltd and later United Counties. This double-deck vehicle apparently soon had its top deck removed and henceforth ran as a single-decker and it was in this form when Oswald and Reginald Kearsley applied to the General Purposes Committee of Wellingborough Urban District Council in May 1921 for a Hackney Carriage licence to ply for hire in this town. The licence was granted and the Thornycroft at this point seated twelve inside and two outside and the service was extended to Wellingborough from Rushden via Sander's Lodge and Little Irchester.

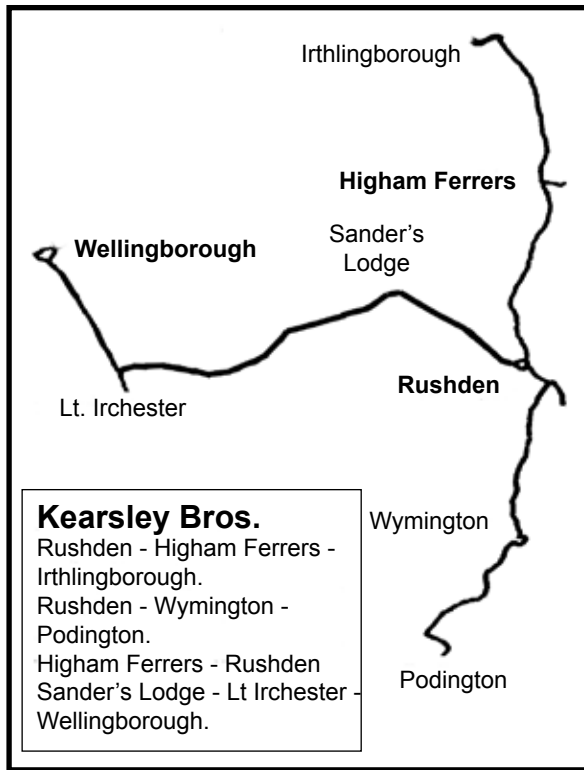
In addition to the aforementioned service Oswald Kearsley also ran a lunch time service that took shoe workers from Rushden to Wymington and Podington and return within the hour. He may also have provided journeys from these villages to Rushden in the mornings and back at factory closing times. It was probably to operate this route that the top was taken off the Thornycroft double-decker as low railway bridges would have prevented the operation of a double-decker on the Podington road.

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.

KEARSLEY Bros. - HIGHAM FERRERS

Reginald Kearsley does not appear to have been actively involved with the operation and no doubt because the one bus could not support two livelihoods, Reginald would have been otherwise engaged. Oswald Kearsley married Lily Marriott and she acted as his conductress. The bus was garaged at the back of a shop in York Road, Higham Ferrers and the operation is believed to have continued until late 1925, by which time the vehicle probably needed replacing.

It is known that Oswald was still running on 6th December 1924 as he was summoned to appear at Higham Ferrers Sessions on 12th January 1925 in connection with a motoring incident in which he pulled his bus out into the middle of the road causing a following United Counties' bus to brake sharply.



After discontinuing his bus service Oswald Kearsley joined the Rushden & District-Transport Co Ltd and became its manager. This Company was closely associated with the Wargate Motor Engineering Company, which also operated buses, as revealed in paper NN-WA9.

In addition to his bus, Oswald Kearsley also ran taxis and/or private hire cars as in June 1924 he was admonished by the authorities for using two cars with one licence and in February 1926 Lily Kearsley was reported in connection with the use of a Hackney Carriage registered BC 2616 but what this vehicle was is not known.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts
							New	S/H	W/D			
?	Thornycroft	J	?	?	O36R?/ B14R Taxi?	—	?	-/20	-/25?	War Department	?	
BC 2616	?	?	?	?		—	?	?	?	?	?	1

Notes: 1 - BC 2616 was in operation at 2/26.