

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-CO10  
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## COOPER. Thomas Bradshaw Roade Main Garage Ltd London Road ROADE

This paper dealing with the coaching exploits of Thomas Bradshaw Cooper - always known as Tommy - is of necessity rather vague as there are several issues connected with it that have defied accurate dating. However, it is known that Tommy Cooper was running his garage and petrol station situated on the London Road passing through the village of Roade prior to the Second World War. The premises remain a garage on the Stratford side of the railway bridge under the A508. At some stage Cooper's operation was turned into a limited company, prior to 1951, trading as Roade Main Garage Ltd.

It seems that Tommy Cooper turned his attention to running coaches in the post-War period when, in March 1948, he is believed to have bought a new thirty-two seat Commer Commando with Thurgood bodywork and registered AVV 98. With this machine he operated private hires only.



*Right:- Tommy Cooper stands with his Commer coach AVV 98 at his Roade garage.*

Bygone Buses of Northamptonshire is compiled by R M Warwick, "Torestyn" 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.

#### COOPER. Thomas Bradshaw - ROADE

In October 1950 Cooper applied to the East Midlands Traffic Commissioners under the name of Roade Main Garage Ltd for an Express Service licence to enable him to convey employees of Pianoforte Supplies Ltd of Roade, between Towcester and the Simplex Works at Roade via Heathencote Turn, Shutlanger and Stoke Bruerne. The appropriate licence was granted in January 1951 and renewed without modification in September 1953, expiring at the end of November 1956.

Initially Tommy Cooper no doubt used his Commer Commando on his newly won contract but soon acquired a secondhand coach for this purpose, probably early in 1951. The chosen vehicle was a thirty-one seat Vulcan registered FNR 424 and fitted with a body built by the Syston firm of Crawford Prince-Johnson.

During 1953 Tommy Cooper's health deteriorated and it is believed that in December of that year the Vulcan was either sold or hired to Richardson's Coaches of Hartwell, who thereafter operated the Simplex Works contract on behalf of Cooper. Richardson's did not apply to acquire the necessary licence for this work until May 1956, some six months prior to its expiration, which tends to support the belief that Richardson's technically operated on hire. As with the licence, the Vulcan FNR 424 eventually passed into Richardson's ownership.

At an unknown date in 1954 Tommy Cooper sold his Commer Commando AVV 98 to S E Smith's Coaches of Potterspurty. Not too long after these events Tommy Cooper died and the business passed to his wife who shortly afterwards sold the Company.



*Luckily young Peter Griffin decided he wanted to become a pirate, otherwise this picture which features Vulcan FNR 424 in the background, would not have been taken. By this time the coach was in Richardson's possession.*

#### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body Number	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
							New	S/H	W/D			
AVV 98	Commer	Commando	17A1050	Thurgood	C32F	477	3/48	—	-/54	—	Smith, Potterspurty	
FNR 424	Vulcan	6PF	4054	C P-J	C31F	—	9/49	c-/51	12/53	Smeeton, Gt.Bowden	Richardson, Hartwell	1

Notes: 1 - FNR 424 - body by Crawford Prince-Johnson, Syston.