

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-RO2

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ROBINSON. Charles Osborne t/a St.Edmund's Motor Company Kettering Road, NORTHAMPTON

Charles Robinson was apprenticed to a Kettering engineering firm during the period 1890 to 1894, after which time he set up his own business in Northampton in partnership with his elder brother Samuel, as cycle repairers and dealers.

In 1907 Charles Robinson branched out into the then up-and-coming motor trade, renting premises in Northampton between the Kettering and Wellingborough Roads and near to Abington Square. A repair garage faced the Kettering Road and a shop faced the Wellingborough Road, whilst the Robinson family lived above these premises. It seems the firm was named "St.Edmund's" Motor Company because the premises stood on the site once occupied by a priory of that name and it is said that when the inspection pits were dug, human skeletons were uncovered.

Evidently the business grew rapidly as in 1911 it moved into larger premises on the opposite side of Kettering Road and linking through to St.Michael's Road. The premises had previously been Lucas's Brewery and the Robinsons moved into the former Brewery Manager's house. Charles Robinson built a showroom on the Kettering Road frontage and a repair shop in St.Michael's Road. After the First World War an Austin Agency was held which was lost again in 1923. The firm ceased trading a few years later, closing down in 1928. After standing idle for some time the premises were again used as a garage, trading as St.Edmund's Garage.

It will be seen from the above account that the principal business carried out by the St.Edmund's Motor Company was the sale and repair of motor cars. However, Charles Robinson applied to Northampton Borough Council for a Hackney Carriage licence and this was granted by the Watch Committee for the period 16th April 1923 to 25th March 1924. The licence permitted the operation of a motor charabanc but the picking-up point is not documented.

No trace has been found of the vehicle(s) operated by Charles Robinson, if indeed he ever took up the option given by the licence.

Thanks are due to Charles Robinson's son, Colin, for the supply of information relating to his father's garage business.

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.