

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**NN-BR3**  
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## **BRIGGS Bros., H.V., F.E. & B.E.** **40 High Street** **WELLINGBOROUGH**

Research suggests that there were three Briggs brothers involved in bus or charabanc operation in Wellingborough in the immediate post First World War period although, it seems, this activity was secondary to the main employment of each brother. The lead in the enterprise appears to have come from Henry Victor Briggs who ran a motor garage situated at the corner of High Street and Church Street, Wellingborough. His office address was at 40 High Street whilst the garage was around the corner at 34 Church Street. One of Henry's brothers was Frank Edwin Briggs who kept the Dun Cow public house at 2 Gold Street, Wellingborough and it is quite possible that Frank recognised the opportunities his business offered for the promotion of private parties to local and, in the summer months, more distant attractions. Nothing has been uncovered with regard to the third brother - B E Briggs.

Exactly how the Briggs brothers branched out into vehicle operation is also far from clear. From known vehicle details it could well have been that a McCurd lorry was first acquired on 2nd February 1918 when BD 3672 was registered. A couple of taxis may have been the basis of the next development as on 14th February 1919 a 15 horse power Napier landaulet registered LA 9289, and new in June 1914, was bought second-hand and was followed three weeks later by the acquisition of a new Arrol-Johnston 23.9 horse power blue cabriolet registered EL 1197.

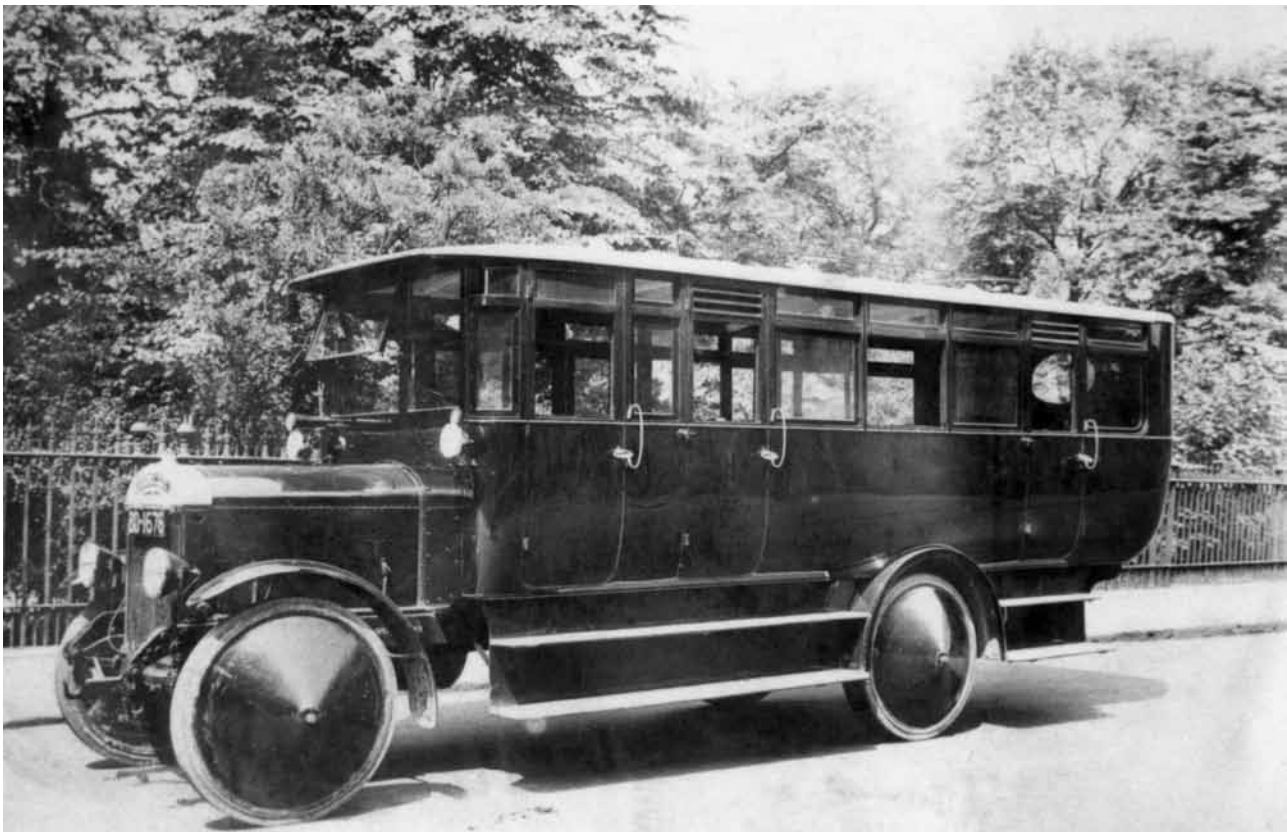
The early months of 1919 were a busy time for the Briggs brothers as on 15th March an Austin lorry registered BD 534 was taken into stock and described as a green dray with sides. There are no indications to suggest that this vehicle was used as a public conveyance. However, on 20th October 1919 a 40 horse power Thornycroft 4 ton motor lorry was purchased and registered BD 3828. This vehicle was used for passenger work, being described as "dual purpose" in registration records and was painted green and black with gold lettering. Application was immediately made to the Wellingborough Urban District Council's General Purpose Committee for a Hackney Carriage licence for a bus which seated thirty inside and three outside, this being granted on 5th November 1919.

Evidently the Briggs brothers were satisfied with the returns they were getting from the operation of BD 3828 as two more Thornycrofts were added to the fleet, almost certainly

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.

### BRIGGS Bros. - Wellingborough

in 1920. One was registered BD 1676 and the other BD 1797, the latter being recorded as a saloon bus and probably having bodywork by Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt of Oxford Street, Wellingborough, which firm is known to have supplied a body to the Briggs brothers. The history of BD 1676 is much more confused. Many years ago a Wellingborough resident who recalled Briggs' vehicles gave the Author the pair of photographs appearing below and depicting what was alleged to be Briggs' Thornycroft BD 1676. However, the same pair of photographs appeared in the Commercial Motor of 5th July 1921 with the caption "A Thornycroft limousine motor coach which incorporates a saloon compartment at the rear with a table in the centre. The vehicle has been supplied to a Rushden user". It is known that Asher Abbott of Rushden in due course ran BD 1676 with the body shown in the photographs. What is uncertain, therefore, is whether BD 1676 was ever owned by the Briggs brothers and if so whether it always carried the body illustrated, or whether Abbott rebodied the vehicle when he acquired it. The 1920 Roads Act prevented the reissuing of registration numbers after January 1921 so BD 1676 certainly dates from prior to 1921. Alternatively the Commercial Motor caption may be misleading. One thing that is certain is that the body carried by BD 1676 was built by a significant coachbuilder, and aptly described in the Commercial Motor as a "limousine motor coach". A further complication is that Northamptonshire registration records show BD 1676 to have been a Sunbeam open touring car registered on 16th February 1921 and current until 31st December 1927!



*Looking as though it was built to railway carriage specifications this photograph depicts the well proportioned Thornycroft BD 1676.*

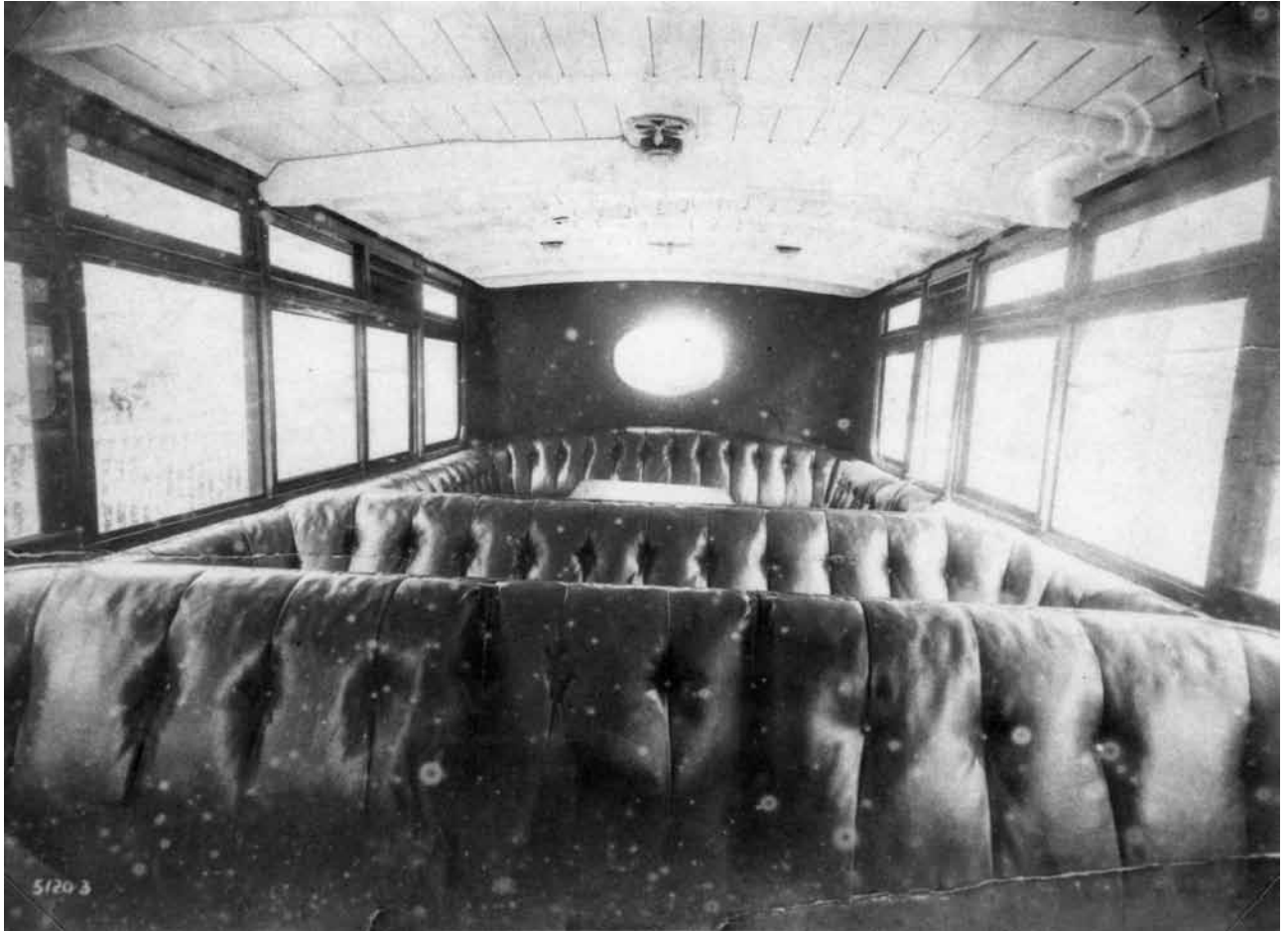
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*The interior seating of BD 1676 was reached by three separate passenger doors in charabanc fashion, although the rear saloon also contained a table. Look at the sumptuous leather upholstery! This was certainly no run-of-the-mill vehicle.*

### BRIGGS' BROS.

#### SALOON CHAR-A-BANCS

WILL RUN TO

#### Bedford,

SUNDAY NEXT, JULY 18th.

Start 2 p.m., Market-square, Wellingborough;

Return 8 p.m. from Bunyan Monument, Bedford.

FARE 4s. 6d. return.

ALSO

#### Leicester Races,

MONDAY, JULY 19th. Start 10 a.m.

FARE 7s. 6d. return. Bookings at

#### BRIGGS,

49, HIGH STREET, WELLINGBOROUGH

W17

The advertisement to the left appeared in the Kettering Evening Telegraph on 17th July 1920 demonstrating that Briggs was running charabancs at this date.

The next known passenger vehicle to be bought by the Briggs brothers was BD 6090, another Thornycroft, fitted with a saloon body and registered on 17th September 1921.

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**BRIGGS Bros. - Wellingborough**

**BY "GLORIA"**  
**To YARMOUTH,**

AUGUST 4th. Return AUGUST 11th.  
FARE 25/-.

Luggage Free. A few Seats left.

**BRIGGS BROS.,**  
**WELLINGBOROUGH.**

ALL LUGGAGE COLLECTED.

W12

In January 1925 the Briggs Brothers bought a Morris registered RP 339 and which was ostensibly a lorry but may well have also doubled as a charabanc. The advertisement to the left dating from June 1925 shows that the firm was running a charabanc named "Gloria" and possibly this was the Morris.

It seems that the Briggs brothers ceased operating passenger vehicles by the end of the summer season 1928 at the latest, thereafter concentrating on the haulage side of their operation. Meanwhile Henry Victor Briggs

continued on his own as a Motor Agent and Factor. In May 1936 the hauliers T H Clark (Rothwell) Ltd acquired Briggs brothers' transport business, thus bringing to an end an interesting family transport concern.

### Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
							New	S/H	W/D			
BD 3672	McCurd	40hp	?		Lorry		2/18	—	4/28	—	No further owner	1
LA 9289	Napier	15hp	?		Taxi?		6/14	2/19	?	?		2
EL 1197	Arrol-Johnston	23.9hp	?		Taxi?		3/19	—	?	—		2
BD 534	Austin		20433		Lorry		3/19	—	by 1/27	—	York, Ward & Rowlatt, W'boro	1
BD 3828	Thornycroft	40hp	7612		Lorry/ B33 B25?		10/19	—	7/33	—	No further owner	3
BD 1676	Thornycroft	J					-/20	—	c-/21	—	A Abbott, Rushden	4
BD1797	Thornycroft	J	6280	Y.W&R?	B		-/20	—	?	—	H Billson, Wellingborough	5
BD 5989	Ford	T	92915		6		4/21	—	by 9/25	—	England, Wellingborough	6
BD 6090	Thornycroft	J	9274		B		9/21	—	9/28	—	No further owner	
RP 339	Morris		2281		Lorry		1/25	—	6/34	—		7

**Notes:** 1 - Not recorded as being used as a public conveyance.

3 - Last licensed to Briggs Bros as a van 7/33.

5 - Last licensed 10/33.

7 - One passenger vehicle was named "Gloria" and this may have been RP 339.

2 - Used as a public conveyance - probably a taxi.

4 - See narrative.

6 - Last licensed 9/25.