

# Bygone Buses

of  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

NN-R01  
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## ROBERTS. Arthur Britain Cottage and later Sunnymead, Tiffield Road GAYTON

Arthur Roberts did not commence operating buses until 1928 when he purchased a REO charabanc that had been new to Walter Keach of Kettering in 1925 when it was registered RP 752. It is understood that Roberts inaugurated a service from Gayton to Northampton routed via Blisworth and Milton. Indeed, he applied to Northampton Borough Council for a Hackney Carriage Licence in connection with this service in July 1928 and was granted permission to stand in St John's Street with a twenty-seater bus.



*A nearside view of Arthur Roberts' attractive Thornycroft A1 saloon registered RP 6070, photographed at Gayton. The two fully dropped windows reveal the decorative pelmets fitted to this bus whilst the picture on the next page shows the accompanying curtains.*

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.

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ROBERTS. Arthur - GAYTON

The REO charabanc in Arthur Roberts' possession was probably used for private hire purposes and was not suitable for the proposed local bus service from Gayton to Northampton. Accordingly Arthur Roberts bought a brand new Thornycroft A1 twenty-seater saloon bus from Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt of Wellingborough, with a body that may well have been built by that firm. The bus in question took the registration RP 6070 on 5th June 1928.



*The offside of Thornycroft A1 - RP 6070. The oval logo on the side of the coachwork contains the initials A.R.*

Evidently Arthur Roberts thought it would be wise to acquire a relief bus for his new service or perhaps the timings called for a second bus or certain journeys needed duplicating. Whatever the reason Arthur bought a third-hand REO Sprinter in about October 1928 that had earlier been used by Albert Shaw of Lower Harlestone. Registered RP 5882 it is likely that both this and the REO charabanc would have been acquired from Northampton REO Agents Messrs Allchin & Son.

The Minutes of Northampton Borough Council Watch Committee record that Arthur Roberts was granted a Hackney Carriage Licence in January 1930 to enable a fourteen-seat Morris saloon to ply for hire from St John's Street. Unfortunately it has not been possible to trace any further information regarding this bus. However, the Morris was not a replacement for the REO charabanc as this vehicle remained licensed until the end of September 1930 after which time it was scrapped.

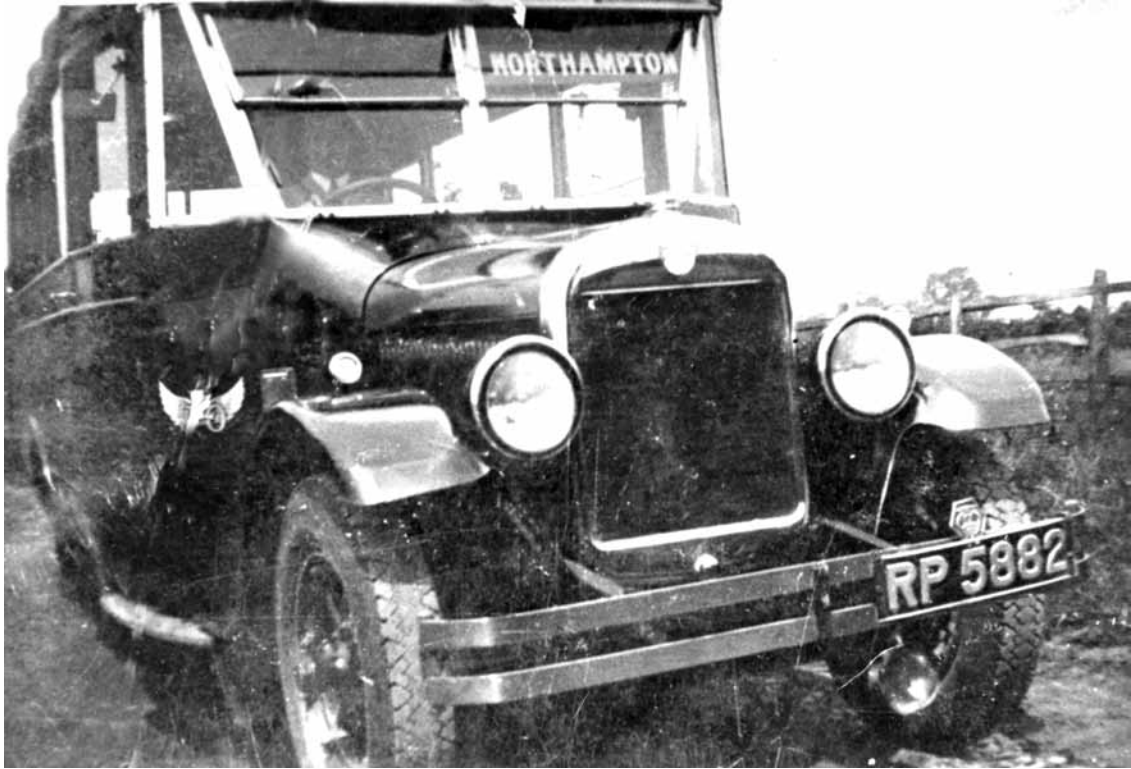
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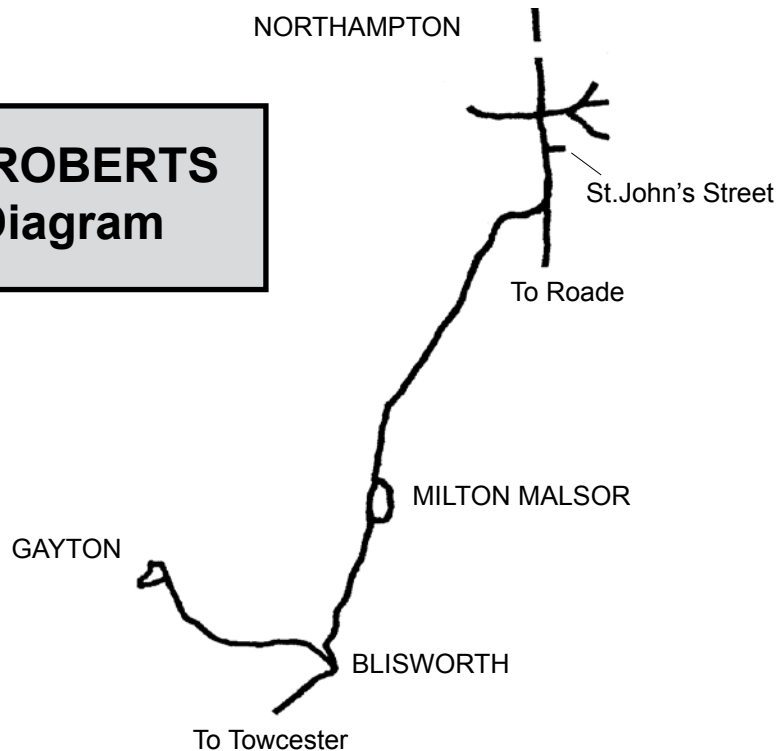
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ROBERTS. Arthur - GAYTON



*This photograph depicts Arthur Roberts at the wheel of his twenty-seat REO Sprinter RP 5882, parked at Gayton and showing a Northampton destination board.*

### ARTHUR ROBERTS Route Diagram



ROBERTS. Arthur - GAYTON

In the following year, 1931, Arthur Roberts was required to apply to the Traffic Commissioners for a Road Service Licence to enable him to continue his Gayton - Blisworth - Milton - Northampton service. He did so in November 1931 and this route was subsequently granted and later took the Commissioners' reference TER 327/1. Apart from modifying fares, Arthur Roberts made no further alterations to his timetable.

However, on 24th March 1932 Arthur treated himself and his passengers to a brand new Bedford WLB which acquired the registration NV 1187 and seated twenty passengers. The builder of its coachwork has not been confirmed but, as the vehicle was supplied by Messrs Grose of Northampton, it is quite possible that Arthur Roberts' bus was also bodied by the same firm. Sadly, the life of NV 1187 was destined to be short as it was destroyed by fire along with Roberts' garage on Tuesday 13th June 1933. The event was reported in the Northampton Mercury & Herald as follows:-

**“FIERCE BLAZE AT GAYTON  
GARAGE AND BUS DESTROYED  
THREAT TO BUNGALOW  
CALL TO NORTHAMPTON BRIGADE**

A 20-seater motor bus was burned out in a garage fire at Gayton on Tuesday, which caused damage to the amount of between £600 and £700.

The garage and bus belonged to Mr. Arthur Roberts, of Sunnymead, a bungalow which, but for the efforts of the village folk pending the arrival of the Northampton Fire Brigade, might also have been destroyed.

The garage adjoined the bungalow.

Mrs. Puxley, whose house is near that of Mr. Roberts, saw smoke issuing from the garage, and called to Mr. Roberts, who was working in the garden. As soon as he opened the garage door the bus burst into flames.

The garage, which was of wood, with a galvanised iron roof, was soon on fire, and in a few minutes the flames could be seen for many miles around.

The Northampton Fire Brigade were informed, and in the meantime villagers went to Mr. Roberts' assistance.

It was found that the flames were licking the bungalow, and while some of the helpers removed tiles from the roof and threw buckets or water down the gable side, others carried furniture out of the house.

The fire blazed with such fury that by the time the Brigade arrived, under Engineer

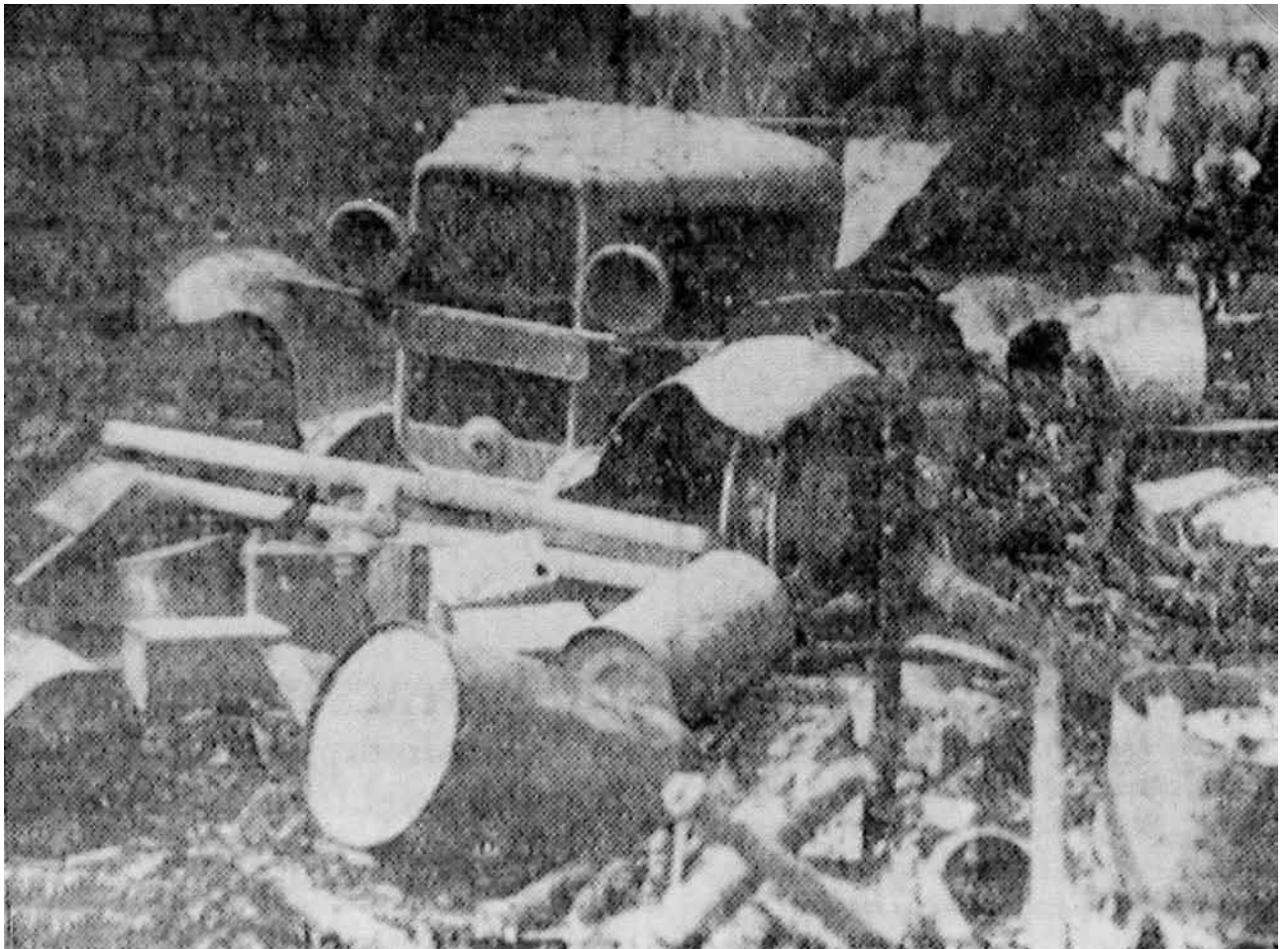


#### ROBERTS. Arthur - GAYTON

H Wrighton, the garage and bus were practically burned out, and attention was devoted to keeping the fire from spreading further into the bungalow.

After nearly two hours' work the fire was put out.

The bus, which had been running only 12 months, and the bungalow were covered by insurance, but the garage was not insured."



*The aftermath of Arthur Roberts' fire which destroyed Bedford WLB - NV 1187 - in June 1933.  
(Photo courtesy Mercury & Herald)*

What influence the fire and loss of Bedford NV 1187 had on Arthur Roberts' decision to quit running buses is not known but on 13th October 1933 he entered into an Agreement with United Counties Omnibus Co Ltd to sell the Goodwill of his Road Service Licence for the princely sum of £50. In fact United Counties commenced operating Arthur Roberts' route, which it numbered 52, with effect from Wednesday 18th October 1933 under Short Period Licences. The transfer of the substantive Licence was not granted by the Traffic Commissioners until 2nd February 1934 and the sale was legally concluded with Arthur Roberts on 16th February 1934. Arthur joined United Counties as a driver at its Northampton depot.

**ROBERTS. Arthur - GAYTON**

**Rolling Stock:**

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Nts	
							New	S/H	W/D				
RP 752	REO		110417	?	Chara	—	4/25	-/28	9/30	W Keach, Kettering	No further owner		
RP 6070	Thornycroft	A1	15799	YW&R?	B20F	—	6/28	—		Supp by YW&R Wellingborough A Shaw, L Harlestone		1	
RP 5882	REO	Sprinter	FAX5556	?	B20F	—	5/28	c10/28					2
?	Morris				B14	—	?	by 1/30					3
NV 1187	Bedford	WLB	108349	Grose?	20	—	3/32	—	6/33	Supp Grose Ltd., Northampton	Destroyed by Fire		

**Notes:** 1 - RP 6070 - Last owned by A J Sanders, Gt Harrowden for agricultural use and last licensed 5/37.  
 2 - RP 5882 Last licensed 12/36.  
 3 - No details known of this Morris.

The service United Counties first operated between Northampton and Gayton was as shown below and as the timetable was worked from the Gayton end it is pretty certain that it was Arthur Roberts timings that the Company at first continued. One bus was required for the operation.

**SERVICE 52 • NORTHAMPTON • MILTON • BLISWOTH • GAYTON**

	Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays							Wednesdays							
	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	.....	.....	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Northampton, St.John's St	7.25	8.40	2.00	5.45	7.10	.....	.....	7.25	8.40	12.35	2.15	3.45	5.45	7.10	9.15
Milton	7.40	8.55	2.15	6.00	7.25	.....	.....	7.40	8.55	12.50	2.30	4.00	6.00	7.25	9.30
Blisworth	7.45	9.00	2.20	6.05	7.30	.....	.....	7.45	9.00	12.55	2.35	4.05	6.05	7.30	9.35
Gayton	7.55	9.10	2.30	6.15	7.40	.....	.....	7.55	9.10	1.00	2.45	4.15	6.15	7.40	9.45
	Saturdays							Sundays							
	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	
Northampton, St.John's St	7.25	8.40	12.45	2.15	3.45	5.45	7.15	9.15	10.45	11.30	2.45	5.40	7.45	9.15	10.30
Milton	7.40	8.55	1.00	2.30	4.00	6.00	7.30	9.30	11.00	11.45	3.00	5.55	8.00	9.30	10.45
Blisworth	7.45	9.00	1.05	2.35	4.05	6.05	7.35	9.35	11.05	11.50	3.05	6.00	8.05	9.35	10.50
Gayton	7.55	9.10	1.15	2.45	4.15	6.15	7.45	9.45	11.15	12.00	3.15	6.10	8.15	9.45	11.00
	Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays							Wednesdays							
	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	.....	.....	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Gayton	6.55	8.05	10.30	4.50	6.30	.....	.....	6.55	8.05	10.50	1.25	2.50	4.45	6.30	8.20
Blisworth	7.05	8.15	10.40	5.00	6.40	.....	.....	7.05	8.15	11.00	1.35	3.00	4.55	6.40	8.30
Milton	7.10	8.20	10.45	5.05	6.45	.....	.....	7.10	8.20	11.05	1.40	3.05	5.00	6.45	8.35
Northampton, St.John's St	7.25	8.30	11.00	5.20	7.00	.....	.....	7.25	8.35	11.20	1.55	3.20	5.15	7.00	8.50
	Saturdays							Sundays							
	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.		
Gayton	6.55	8.05	10.50	1.20	2.50	4.45	6.20	8.20	9.50	10.30	1.55	5.05	6.20	8.25	9.55
Blisworth	7.05	8.15	11.00	1.30	3.00	4.55	6.30	8.30	10.00	10.45	2.05	5.15	6.30	8.35	10.05
Milton	7.10	8.20	11.05	1.35	3.05	5.00	6.35	8.35	10.05	10.50	2.10	5.20	6.35	8.40	10.10
Northampton, St.John's St	7.25	8.35	11.20	1.50	3.20	5.15	6.50	8.50	10.20	11.00	2.25	5.35	6.50	8.55	10.25