

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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EALLES, William George later **W G Eales (Transport) Ltd** (505575) **34 Finedon Road/Gisburne Road** **WELLINGBOROUGH**

The Wellingborough firm of W G Eales was essentially a road haulage business which almost by chance came to operate three buses between circa 1950 and 1965.

William George Eales was born on 26th April 1902 and after leaving school he worked as a van boy for the Wellingborough hauliers Briggs Bros which firm, incidentally, also operated charabancs in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Later Billy Eales drove for the Briggs brothers and later still for Jimmy Masters of Wellingborough who operated one or two lorries transporting leather waste for recycling.

In 1924 Billy Eales started his own haulage business, firstly from his home at 35 Gordon Road, Wellingborough but using a lock-up garage in Finedon Road. In the 1930s a new garage was built in Gisburne Road, Wellingborough whilst in 1940 Billy Eales moved home to 34 Finedon Road. By about 1942/3 the Gisburne Road premises had become overcrowded and arrangements were made to park lorries on farm land in Doddington Road, which was eventually purchased in the 1963/4 period.

One of Billy Eales main customers was the Wellingborough Iron Company which, after the War in about 1947, was employing numerous Poles, Latvians and other East European workers. Most were housed at a Displaced Persons' Camp at Podington and the Iron Company contracted Billy Eales to convey these workers from Podington to Wellingborough each morning and to return them at night. For this purpose Billy Eales used a 1934 Bedford drop-side lorry registered VV 3120 equipped with longitudinal wooden seating for ten each side and, a canvas hood to provide cover from inclement weather.

This short distance transport tied down a valuable lorry for fairly short periods of the day and was therefore a bit of a nuisance to Billy Eales. Consequently, in about 1950 he bought a Bedford WTB coach registered NV 7612 that was being disposed of by L J Adams of Rothwell, trading as Buckby's Coaches. Having acquired this vehicle it seemed logical to use it for private hires also, and this Billy Eales did.

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.

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Above: Bedford WTB - NV 7612 - whilst in the ownership of Buckby's Coaches of Rothwell.

In 1952 Billy Eales and his wife decided to transform the business into a limited company and on 15th March 1952 W G Eales (Transport) Ltd was incorporated.

NV 7612 provided good service for around four years, when the opportunity arose to purchase a Bedford OB with Duplex V bodywork, registered AVV 669, from Manfield & Son, the Northampton shoemakers who were running down their fleet of buses at this time. Thus, in June 1954, the dark/light green Bedford OB - AVV 669 - replaced the older Bedford WTB - NV 7612 - which was sold for further use to Roland Walker of Wellingborough in July 1954. By this time, however, the requirement to transport the Displaced Persons between

Podington and Wellingborough had finished and the main private hire work undertaken by Billy Eales was the transport of the Wellingborough Town Rugby Club to away matches



This photograph, taken in September 1962, shows W G Eales' Bedford OB coach AVV 669 with its twenty-nine seat Duplex V body. As will be seen, its coachwork was kept in pristine condition. (Photo courtesy F Gainsbury)

EALES. W. G. - Wellingborough

and miscellaneous tours, in the winter months and the Wellingborough Town Cricket Club during the summer. The rest of Billy Eales work was more casual and apart from catering for Eales' own Social Club requirements AVV 669 was hired to the Post Office each year for Christmas mail deliveries.

The coach operation aspect of Billy Eales' business was at all time subordinate to his haulage work and matters continued in much the same vein for the next decade. In 1964 Eales' coach driver felt that additional private hire work could be obtained if the firm had a more up-to-date coach and this led to the purchase of ORY 551, a Bedford SBG dating from 1956 and fitted with a Duple Vega forty-one seat body, from Johnson's Motors of Rushden, remaining in that firm's orange and cream livery. It so happened that the Social Club of W G Eales (Transport) Ltd, by now the main user of the coach, had surplus funds and a considerable sum was spent by the Club on the refurbishment of ORY 551, the work including the fitment of new heaters and the reupholstering of the seats.

By 1965 W G Eales (Transport) Ltd decided the time was right to dispense with its coach operations and to concentrate exclusively on the haulage side of the business. Consequently arrangements were made with Royal Blue of Pytchley to take over Eales' two coaches and honour pre-booked private hire commitments in April 1965.

Sadly, in the following year at the end of December 1966 Billy Eales died but his wife and two sons continued with the family business.

I am indebted to Robert and Clifford Eales, sons of Billy Eales, for supplying information for this paper.

Rolling Stock:

Regn. No.	Chassis	Type	Chassis No.	Body	Seats	Body No.	Dates			Former Owner	Disposal	Notes
							New	S/H	W/D			
VV 3120	Bedford		870552		Lorry/ Bus 20		9/34	? -/47	12/50	J S Owen, Northampton	-	1
NV 7612	Bedford	WTB	110701	Willowbrook	C25F	2882	7/36	c-/50	7/54	L J Adams, Rothwell	R D Walker, Wellingborough	
AVV 669	Bedford	OB	92428	Duple V	C29F	52146	1/49	6/54	4/65	Manfield & Son, Northampton	E Church, Pytchley	
ORY 551	Bedford	SBG	43490	Duple Vega	C41F	1060/160	3/56	-/64	4/65	Johnson's Mtrs., Rushden	E Church, Pytchley	

Notes: 1 - VV 3120 was originally a Grose built box van but was rebodied as a drop-side lorry when acquired by Eales who later fitted it with two bench seats for 10 and a canvas cover.