

ABRAM. Joseph Charles **77 Station Road,** **EARLS BARTON**

Joseph Charles Abram was residing at 77 Station Road, Earls Barton when he ordered a model T Ford saloon bus from Henry Oliver Ltd the Northampton based Ford Agent on 24th September 1924. The appointed vehicle was ready for the road at the end of October 1924 when Oliver's registered it RP 112 on 28th of that month and Joseph Abram paid £221 when he collected his bus on 31st October 1924.

Abram put his new Ford to work on a service from Earls Barton Square to Wellingborough (terminus unknown) operating via Wilby in competition with United Counties. It was only a matter of months before Joseph Abram was looking for a slightly larger vehicle and he turned to Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt of Wellingborough for the supply of a Thornycroft chassis to which was fitted a body of the Wellingborough firm's own construction, seating twenty passengers. This addition to Abram's fleet was registered RP 665 on 27th March 1925.

Joseph Abram was well satisfied with his new Thornycroft saloon, so much so that he returned to York, Ward & Rowlatt for another similar vehicle in November 1925. The chassis model was a Thornycroft A1 and it was again fitted with a body manufactured by the Wellingborough Dealer and seated twenty passengers. The completed bus was registered RP 1870 on 3rd November 1925 and it increased Abram's fleet to three vehicles.

Meanwhile, in February 1925 in fact, Joseph Abram applied to Northampton Borough Council Watch Committee for permission to stand buses at Campbell Square and the application was granted, initially for the Ford and later for the Thornycrofts. Commencing on Monday 25th May 1925 Joseph Abram inaugurated a Monday to Saturday service departing from Wellingborough Market Square at 8.05am for Northampton, Campbell Square returning at 9.00am. The purpose for this single return trip is not clear and it does not appear to have operated for long. Later Abram's service to Northampton became a Saturday only operation running between September and April to cater for football supporters.

Bygone Buses

of
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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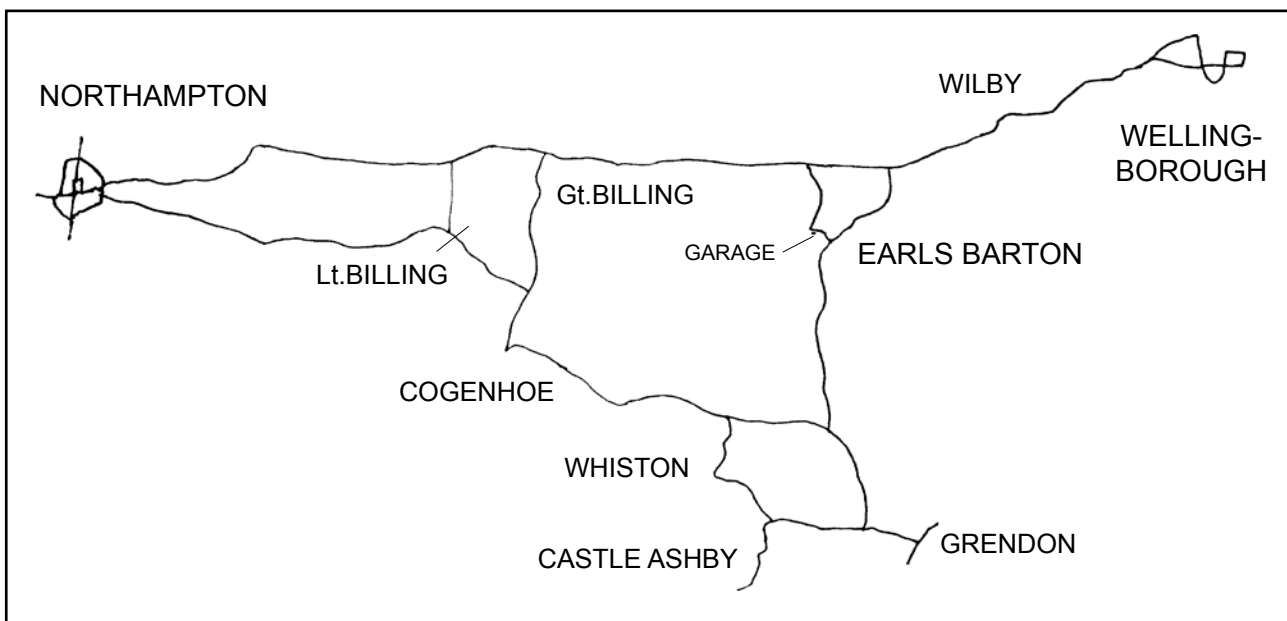
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ABRAM. Joseph C - EARLS BARTON



In this photograph Joseph Abram's Thornycroft A1 with York, Ward & Rowlatt bodywork is shown after sale and with its new owner, Tom Head of Lutton.

By the end of 1926 Joseph Abram's Ford T was proving unsuitable for the work it was required to do and so its owner found himself in the market for another new bus. Again he turned to Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt and acquired a long wheelbase Thornycroft chassis which was fitted with a 31-seat York, Ward & Rowlatt body. This machine was registered RP 3537 on 14th December 1926 and it is almost certain that Abram's original Ford T - RP 112 - was taken by the dealer in part exchange. The Ford moved on to Thomas Norwood of Thurning, near Thrapston, for lighter bus duties where it survived until the end of 1931.



Joseph Abram's main service ran from Earls Barton via Wilby to Wellingborough.

Bygone Buses

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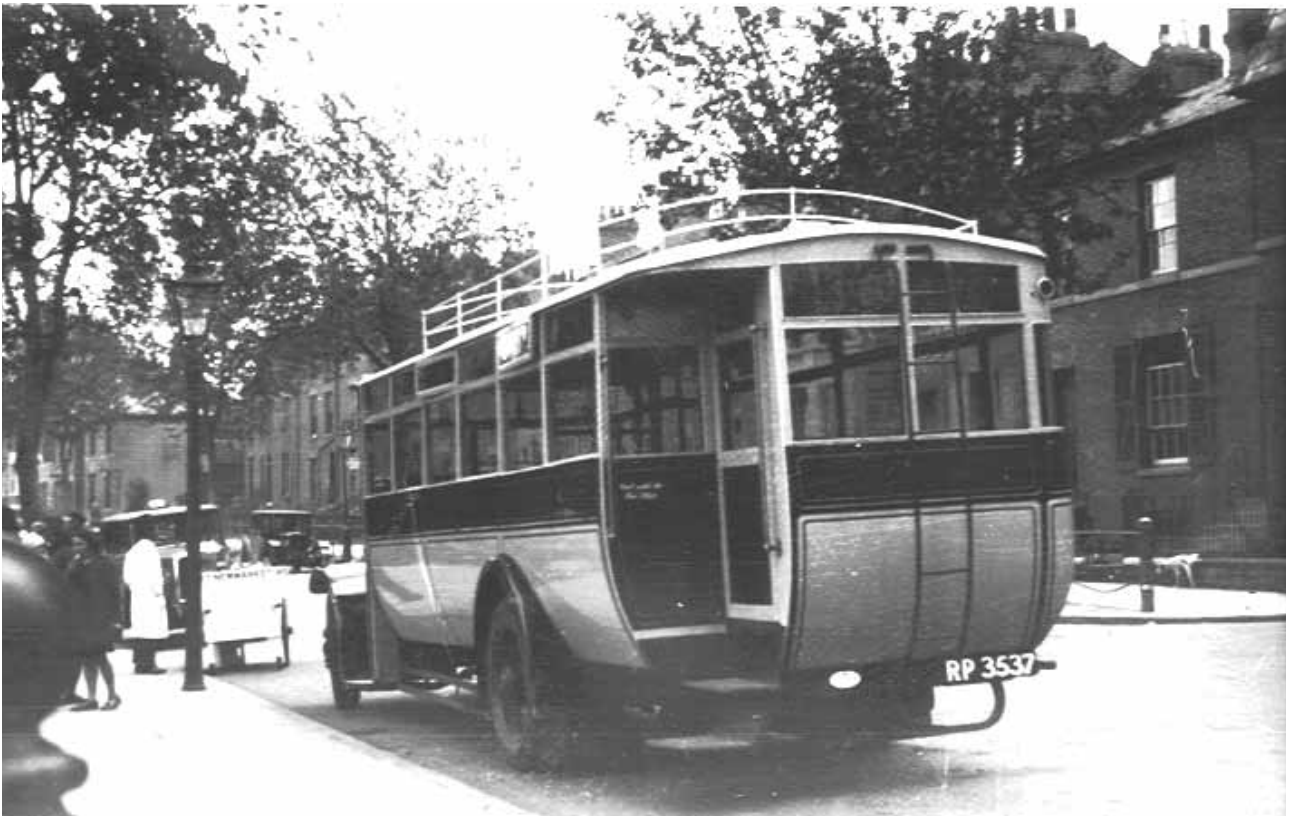
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Happily a couple of photographs of Thornycroft RP 3537 have survived and this print showing an off-side front view was presumably taken when the vehicle was new.



The second photograph of Thornycroft RP 3537 shows the rear of the York, Ward & Rowlatt bodied bus circa 1930 when it was parked at Maids Causeway, Cambridge.

(Photo courtesy D S Deacon)

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: **ABRAM. Joseph C - EARLS BARTON** :
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At unknown dates in the latter half of the 1920s Joseph Abram operated local services to and from Barker's Shoe Factory in Earls Barton picking up and setting down within the village; an August Bank Holiday Monday service to Castle Ashby and excursions, principally to Yarmouth, Clacton and Skegness, and a number of evening tours.

Abram added a fourth bus to his fleet in August 1928 when he purchased yet another Thornycroft, this time an A6 model, with 26-seat York, Ward & Rowlatt bodywork. It was supplied by the body builder and registered RP 6417 on 31st August 1928. By May 1930 Joseph Abram decided to replace RP 1870 and it is believed he traded it in part exchange with Messrs York, Ward & Rowlatt for a Commer Invader to which the dealer fitted a 20-seat body. The Commer took the registration RP 9003 on 31st May 1930 and Thornycroft RP 1870, ousted from Abram's fleet, saw further service with new-comer to the bus business - Alec Head of Luton - an operator still very much in business today (1995).

It is suspected that Joseph Abram didn't much care for the prospects of the 1930 Road Traffic Act with its promise of regulation and, in December 1930, he offered his services and vehicles to United Counties Omnibus & Road Transport Co Ltd. This latter Company did not progress the matter at that stage and after the Act had been introduced, to all intents and purposes as far as bus services were concerned from 1st April 1931, Abram was obliged to apply for licences to continue the operations he had undertaken during the previous year. This he did in August 1931, at which time he was living at 3 Queen Street, Earls Barton having moved from Station Road to 11 King Street by November 1925 and at an unknown date to Queen Street. Abram's garage was situated in West Street between Park Street and Aggate Way.

Joseph Abram applied for three Stage Carriage services, the first being from Earls Barton to Wellingborough on a daily basis, the second being from Earls Barton to Castle Ashby on August Bank Holiday Mondays only and the third being from Earls Barton to Northampton on Saturdays only between September and April. At the same time he also applied for an Excursions & Tours licence starting from Earls Barton and comprising 17 evening tour destinations, 3 day tours and other trips on special occasions. A couple of weeks later Abram applied for a Stage Carriage licence for his Earls Barton workpeople's service and one for a Northampton Market Square to Towcester Races service on Easter Mondays and Tuesdays. By the end of October 1931 Joseph Abram had applied to the Traffic Commissioners to modify his Earls Barton to Wellingborough service by withdrawing the timetable and substituting another which is believed to have provided a more intensive service than the original timetable.

The Traffic Commissioners duly granted licences for the first three Stage Carriage services applied for, on 18th November 1931, along with the E & T licence and the Barker's Factory works service. The Towcester Races and amended Earls Barton to Wellingborough timetable were refused by the Commissioners on 25th November 1931 and a subsequent appeal by Abram was withdrawn prior to an inquiry taking place.

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In March 1932 Joseph Abram again advised United Counties that he was willing to dispose of the whole of his business for £5,000, including four vehicles, two plots of land, a petrol, pump and wooden garage. This time United Counties promptly responded and an Agreement for the Sale and Purchase of Abram's business was signed on 23rd March 1932. The Agreement provided for United Counties to acquire Abram's licences, subject to the Traffic Commissioners' approval, Thornycroft buses RP 665, RP 3537 and RP 6417, Commer Invader RP 9003 and various spare parts. The goodwill of the business was valued at only £5, from which it may be deduced that Abram was not winning his competitive battle with United Counties and, the vehicles at £3,495, making a total purchase price of £3,500. United Counties was not interested in Abram's property which, if Abram's valuation of his business when offered to United Counties was in line with that of United Counties', would indicate a property value of £1,500.

United Counties duly applied in April 1932 to incorporate Abram's Stage Carriage licences into its existing Irthlingborough to Northampton Road Service Licences and also applied to take over Abram's Excursions & Tours licence with one or two modifications. The required licences were duly granted by the Traffic Commissioners and United Counties augmented its services from 4th May 1932 and took over Abram's vehicles from the same date, although the Assignment of the business to United Counties was not legally completed until 30th May 1932. As usual in the case of business acquisitions of this kind, Joseph Abram had to agree not to compete with United Counties for a period of ten years.


Joseph Abram subsequently opened a garage and repair business opposite the first Earls Barton Turn from Wilby and continued successfully until some time after the War. Presumably the cash received from the sale of his bus business assisted with this project.



Pull Up at ABRAM'S GARAGE
(Proprietor: J. C. ABRAM)
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ALL REPAIRS carried out by expert mechanics under personal supervision of the Proprietor.
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Situated on the Main Northampton-Wellingborough Road. Photo: J. W. Barwick, Wellingborough

An advertisement for Joseph Abram's garage at Earls Barton showing the building that was erected in the early 1930s following the cessation of bus services in 1932.

ABRAM. Joseph C - EARLS BARTON

Rolling Stock:

REGN. NO.	CHASSIS			BODY			DATES			PREVIOUS OWNER	INITIAL DISPOSAL
	MAKE	TYPE	NO.	MAKE	TYPE/ SEATS	NO.	NEW	S/H	W/D		
RP 112	Ford	T	10627303		B14F		10/24	-	12/26?	Supplied H Oliver, Northampton	Y.W. & R., W'boro?/ T Norwood, Thurning
RP 665	Thornycroft		11319	Y.W.& R.	B20F		3/25	-	5/32	Supplied York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	U.C.O. & R.T.Co Ltd (258)
RP 1870	Thornycroft	A1	11517	Y.W.& R.	B20F		11/25	-	5/30?	Supplied York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	Y.W. & R., W'boro?/ A Head, Lutton
RP 3537	Thornycroft	LB	13455	Y.W.& R.	B31R		12/26	-	5/32	Supplied York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	U.C.O. & R.T.Co Ltd (259)
RP 6417	Thornycroft	A6	16401	Y.W.& R.	B26F		8/28	-	5/32	Supplied York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	U.C.O. & R.T.Co Ltd (260)
RP 9003	Commer	6TK Invader	28030	Y.W.& R.	B20F		5/30	-	5/32	Supplied York, Ward & Rowlatt, Wellingborough	U.C.O. & R.T.Co Ltd (261)