

Transport *for* Winterslow



On a recent visit to my local hostelry, *The Lord Nelson PH*, I was fortunate to get into a conversation with a fellow parishioner who turned out to be *Richard Bell* who was the last family member to manage *Bells Coaches*, which operated out of *Winterslow* until being sold in 1999 to *Dorset & Wilts*.

As a result of that conversation with *Richard* I decided to research the story of independent providers who operated public transport in and around *Winterslow* from the age of horse drawn provision to motor vehicles; specifically two companies, *Bells* and *Kingston* coaches, who had depots in the heart of *Winterslow*

John Armstead

As well as being the village blacksmith *John Armstead* had been the local carrier before the first world war. In 1918 he and his son *Harold* started a motor bus route to *Salisbury* passing through *Allington*, *Idmiston* and *Winterbourne* three days a week. A timetable from 1969 shows that there were two return trips on *Tuesdays*, one on *Thursdays* and five on *Saturdays*. The service had been very similar twenty years before in 1949 except for one additional *Saturday* evening run and a *Sunday* evening return journey. *Bell's* continued the route until late 1998 by which time it was really unnecessary as *Wilts & Dorset* covered these locations by buses traveling from *Salisbury* to *Tidworth*.

Parsons

The *Parsons* were running a horse-drawn van until the 1920s when they acquired a *Berliet* bus, subsequently using a *Dennis Ace* bus. Their route to *Salisbury* was originally via *Farley*, the *Grimsteads* and *Whaddon*, but was subsequently changed about 1925 to start at *East Winterslow* and go via *Figbury Rings* and the *A30 London* road. It is not known if the change of route was because *Edward Grant* was also running via *Farley*. In 1930 *Parsons* ran twice on *Tuesdays*, *Wednesdays* and *Saturdays*, and once on *Thursdays*. By 1932 the route was run daily and from 1932 to 1935 they traded as *Parsons & Cully*. (*Cyril Cully* was a *Salisbury* coach operator trading as *Gem Coaches*; he sold out to *Wilts & Dorset* in 1938). *Wilfred Parsons* sold to *Wilts & Dorset* in April 1939.

Kingston

Another operator was *Kingston Coaches*, the trading name of *Edward Charles Grant* of *Middle Winterslow*, who was running to *Salisbury* four days a week by 1924.

His route was different from that of *Bell*, going by way of *Farley* and *Whaddon*. This route too grew to daily operation and was sold to *Wilts & Dorset Motor Services* in April 1939.



Knights Motors

Originally a horse-drawn carrier service provided by Edwin Knight, a local farmer, this was replaced by a Dennis motor bus in 1914, running to Salisbury on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. After the first world war this service was acquired by John Malpress who ran it until around January 1926 when it passed to Reg Bell

Bells

In 1921 Reg Bell started a bus service from Pitton to Salisbury, by way of the main A30 London road. Having taken over Knights Motors in 1926 Reg then extended his existing Pitton service back to start from Winterslow. The number of days operated grew gradually and by 1935 the service was daily.

Parsons

There is also a fourth operator who forms part of this story. The Parsons were running a horse-drawn van until the 1920s when they acquired a Berliet bus. Subsequently they used a Dennis Ace bus. Their route to Salisbury was originally via Farley, the Grimsteads and Whaddon, but was subsequently changed in about 1925 to start at East Winterslow and go via Figbury Rings and the A30 London road. The change of route have been because Edward Grant was also running via Farley. In 1930 Parsons ran twice on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and once on Thursdays. By 1932 the route was run daily and from 1932 to 1935 they traded as Parsons & Cully. (Cyril Cully was a Salisbury coach operator trading as Gem Coaches which he sold out to Wilts & Dorset in 1938). Wilfred Parsons sold to Wilts & Dorset in April 1939,

So, by the outbreak of the second war in 1939 there were three bus routes serving the Parish of Winterslow, two provided by Wilts & Dorset, one via Figbury Rings and the other via Farley, but with Bell's still running their own route through Pitton, which they served exclusively. There were few bus-related developments for many years until August 1986 when Bell's Coaches took over the long established business of Armstead of Newton Tony.

Post War

After the Second World War the trading name of Kingston Coaches reappeared in the form of a company run by Alf Tedd, with the help of his sons Gordon and Phil, which went on to purchase Ampport and District in 1977. The Kingston Coaches business was jointly purchased by Thamesdown Transport (Swindon) and Southampton City Transport in the 1980s, and later sold to Wilts & Dorset in 1998. A timetable from 1969 shows that there were two return trips on Tuesdays, one on Thursdays and five on Saturdays. The service had been very similar twenty years before in 1949 except for one additional Saturday evening run and a Sunday evening return journey. Bell's continued the route until late 1998 by which time it was really unnecessary as Wilts & Dorset operated through the same villages

There were few bus-related developments for many years until August 1986 when Bell's Coaches took over the long established business of Armstead of Newton Tony. Bell's became the last of the "traditional independent bus services" to service Winterslow, running into Salisbury until May 1999 when it was sold to Wilts & Dorset, having been run by brothers Richard & Derek initial and then Richard on his own up to that time. Both trading names were retained as part of what became Southern Coach Hire in Salisbury, part of the Go-Ahead group, which had taken over Wilts & Dorset in 2005.

Mick Brown

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