

# **EARLY LOCAL MOTOR BUSES & COACHES**

## **STANSTEAD ABBOTTS AND ST MARGARETS**

### **1921 TO 1935**

#### **BY**

#### **STUART MOYE**

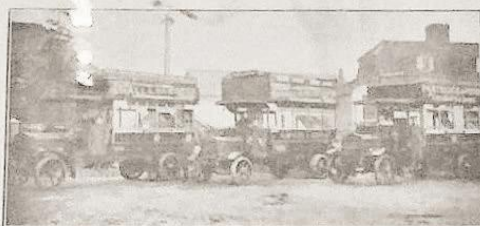
1

The motor omnibus first appeared on London Roads in 1902 and had largely displaced the horse drawn bus by 1914. However the motor buses came a little late to the village with many early services provided by two small local companies rather than the already established larger concerns. For the first time ordinary folk had an affordable means of travelling by road often much more conveniently than on the railway. A case in point being a trip from Stanstead Abbots to neighbouring Hunsdon, a short bus trip up the road compared to a circuitous rail journey to the optimistically named Widford for Hunsdon station. It being almost as far to walk from that railway station to Hunsdon as simply walking from Stanstead to Hunsdon. The frequent stops, reasonable fares and reliable service meant that the introduction of local buses in 1921 made a positive difference to local people's lives. The buses and coaches that stopped closest to the village at Amwell Crossroads have been included in this article despite not running through the village. This has been done because villagers were often willing to walk to the crossroads for the more distant destinations offered by the 310 bus and the Green Line Coach. In particular shopping trips to Enfield Town and Wood Green became quite popular during the 1930s and remained so for some 30 years.

Locally the most important of the large bus companies was the London General Omnibus Company [LGOC or General]. This company was in time to own most of the local bus services. The National Omnibus & Transport Company [National] had been operating buses in London since 1909 and ended up running many of the local village services on behalf of the LGOC. The first small local company was Harvey and Burrows operating as 'Hertford & District Omnibus Services', from a bus garage behind the Town Hall in Ware. The first service was from Hertford to Wormley which started on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1921. The second local company was run by Mr Thurgood a Ware Coachbuilder who registered 'The People's Motor Services Ltd' as a company on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1928. The first route, linking Hertford and Braughing began running soon afterwards from their garage in Park Road in Ware.

1921 saw Harvey and Burrow's first service from Hertford to Wormley via Hertford Heath, supplemented two weeks later by a second bus which also ran from Hertford to Wormley but travelled via Ware and Amwell Crossroads. This was the first bus that served St Margarets, albeit requiring prospective passengers to walk to Amwell Crossroads to benefit from this new form of travel. In late July 1921 Harvey and Burrows began the first service to pass through Stanstead Abbots High Street on its journey between Hertford and Bishops Stortford via The Hadhams. General the London company began running a service on the 11<sup>th</sup> May from Waltham to Ware via Amwell Crossroads extended to Hertford from the 1<sup>st</sup> August. It was later in 1921 that we see the first local signs of the relationship between the two much larger companies and General's long term wish to buy out the small local companies or drive them off the road. It began on December 13<sup>th</sup> when Harvey and Burrows withdrew their Hertford to Bishops Stortford service through the village for it to be replaced the following day by National service N11 run by them on behalf of General. In exchange Harvey and Burrows did not face competition on the road to London as General withdrew their 123 numbered bus service [Waltham Cross – Hertford]. General were in fact very keen to acquire a bus garage in Bishops Stortford and run an east to west service across Hertfordshire. They could of course, at any future date, easily re-introduce a service to Hertford from their existing base at Waltham Cross.

Patronise the Pioneer Motor 'Buses.



## HERTFORD & DISTRICT Motor Omnibus Service

(Proprietors: H. A. HARVEY, F. BURROWS)

CLYDE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, WARE, HERTS.

PRIVATE BUSES AND SALOON CARS FOR HIRE.

### WORMLEY SERVICE.

#### Week Day Service.

WORMLEY	8.40	11.0	1.45	4.15	6.45
BROXBORNE	8.45	11.5	1.50	4.20	6.50 1d.
HODDESDON	8.50	11.15	2.0	4.30	7.0 3d.
HERTFORD HEATH		11.30	2.15	4.45	7.15 6d.
WARE	9.5				
HERTFORD	9.15	11.45	2.30	5.0	7.30 9d.

HERTFORD	9.30	12.0	2.45	5.30	7.45
HERTFORD HEATH	9.45	12.15	3.0	5.45	8.0 3d.
HODDESDON	10.0	12.30	3.15	6.0	8.15 6d.
BROXBORNE	10.10	12.40	3.25	6.10	8.25 7d.
WORMLEY	10.15	12.45	3.30	6.15	8.30 9d.

#### Sundays.

WORMLEY	2.10		5.45	8.0	
BROXBORNE	2.15		5.55	8.10 1d.	
HODDESDON	2.25		6.5	8.20 3d.	
HERTFORD HEATH	2.35	3.45	6.20	8.35 6d.	
HERTFORD	2.50	3.55	6.35	8.50 9d.	
HERTFORD HOSPITAL	3.0	4.0			10d.
HERTFORD HOSPITAL	3.10	4.10			
HERTFORD	3.20	4.20	6.45	9.0 1d.	
HERTFORD HEATH	3.35	4.35	7.0	9.15 4d.	
HODDESDON		4.50	7.15	9.30 7d.	
BROXBORNE		5.0	7.25	9.40 9d.	
WORMLEY		5.10	7.30	9.45 10d.	

### WATTON SERVICE. On and after April 2nd.

#### Daily except Saturdays.

WATTON	8.40	1.45	5.45
STAPLEFORD	8.50	1.55	5.55
WATERFORD	9.0	2.10	6.5
HERTFORD	9.10	2.20	6.15
WARE	9.20	2.35	6.30

#### Saturdays.

WATTON	9.30	12.10	3.15	6.30
STAPLEFORD	9.40	12.20	3.25	6.40
WATERFORD	9.50	12.30	3.35	6.50
HERTFORD	10.0	12.40	3.45	7.0
WARE	10.15	12.45	4.0	7.15

#### Sundays.

WATTON	1.40	3.45	6.15	8.10
STAPLEFORD	1.50	3.55	6.25	8.20
WATERFORD	2.0	4.5	6.35	8.30
HERTFORD	2.15	4.15	6.45	8.45
WARE	2.30	4.30	7.0	9.0

WARE	11.0	4.30	7.15	11.15	2.20	5.30	7.20	2.40	5.15	7.10	9.10
HERTFORD	11.15	4.45	7.30	11.30	2.35	5.45	7.35	2.45	5.30	7.25	9.15
WATERFORD	11.25	4.55	7.40	11.40	2.45	5.50	7.50	2.55	5.40	7.35	9.25
STAPLEFORD	11.35	5.5	7.50	11.50	2.55	6.0	8.5	3.10	5.50	7.45	9.35
WATTON	11.45	5.15	8.5	12.0	3.5	6.10	8.15	3.25	6.5	8.0	9.50

### BRAUGHING SERVICE. On and after April 2nd.

#### Daily except Saturdays.

BRAUGHING	8.30	1.45	6.0
PUCKERIDGE	8.40	1.55	6.10
COLLIERS END	8.50	2.10	6.25
HIGH CROSS	9.0	2.20	6.35
WADESMILL	9.5	2.25	6.40
WARE	9.15	2.35	6.50
HERTFORD	9.0	2.50	7.5

#### Saturdays.

BRAUGHING	9.15	12.0	4.20	7.0
PUCKERIDGE	9.25	12.10	4.30	7.10
COLLIERS END	9.40	12.25	4.45	7.25
HIGH CROSS	9.50	12.35	4.55	7.35
WADESMILL	10.55	12.40	5.0	7.40
WARE	10.10	12.50	5.10	7.55
HERTFORD	10.25	1.5	5.25	8.10

#### Sundays.

BRAUGHING	2.0	5.15	7.45
PUCKERIDGE	2.10	5.25	7.55
COLLIERS END	2.25	5.40	8.10
HIGH CROSS	2.35	5.50	8.20
WADESMILL	2.40	5.55	8.25
WARE	2.50	6.5	8.35
HERTFORD	3.5	6.20	8.50

HERTFORD	10.45	4.20	7.30	10.35	3.0	5.30	8.15	3.30	6.30	9.0
WARE	11.0	4.35	7.45	10.50	3.15	5.45	8.30	3.45	6.45	9.15
WADESMILL	11.15	4.50	7.55	11.5	3.30	5.55	8.45	3.55	6.55	9.25
HIGH CROSS	11.20	4.55	8.0	11.15	3.35	6.5	8.50	4.0	7.0	9.30
COLLIERS END	11.30	5.10	8.10	11.25	3.45	6.15	9.0	4.10	7.10	9.40
PUCKERIDGE	11.45	5.20	8.25	11.40	4.0	6.30	9.15	4.25	7.25	9.50
BRAUGHING	11.55	5.30	8.35	11.50	4.10	6.45	9.25	4.35	7.35	10.0

SATURDAYS: Hertford to Ware and Ware to Hertford every 30 minutes after 1 p.m. Also SUNDAYS every 30 minutes after 2.30 p.m.

Puckeridge to Hertford, 2s. Return.

An early January 1921 timetable for Harvey and Burrows bus service to Wormley with notice of two new routes to be started from April 2<sup>nd</sup> that year. The Wormley service is the first route offered running through Hertford Heath. Mid way through January a second bus ran via Ware and Amwell Cross Roads. The banner at the top clearly emphasises the fact that Harvey and Burrows were the first to provide buses services in this area.

Harvey and Burrows were thought of highly by locals as they ran services very much for the convenience of passengers being willing to pick up and set down anywhere along the route if it was helpful to particular passengers. It was said that the atmosphere on the bus generated by the conductors was very much like a family outing with nothing too much trouble for the paying passengers. Harvey and Burrows like many of the small independent operators saw themselves as in a fight against the big companies and often conveyed this in their publicity.



*A side view of one of Harvey and Burrows open top double deckers. It was quite common in the early 1920s for such buses to have solid rubber tyres and the driver exposed to the elements due to an open cab with no windscreen provided. The firm ran small single decker buses on the more rural routes unsuited to larger buses. In addition they also provided vehicles with driver for private hire work.*

As was to be expected new competing bus routes in Harvey and Burrow's operating area were introduced by General operated on their behalf by National putting pressure on the smaller Harvey and Burrows concern. It is known a battle of words took place in the local paper but we will never know what was said behind closed doors or the manoeuvrings for passengers that took place out on the road. It was very much a surprise to local people when in May 1924 Harvey and Burrows sold out to General. The sale included all the operating licences, all the 25 or so vehicles and the staff plus the local company's garage located behind the Town Hall in Ware.

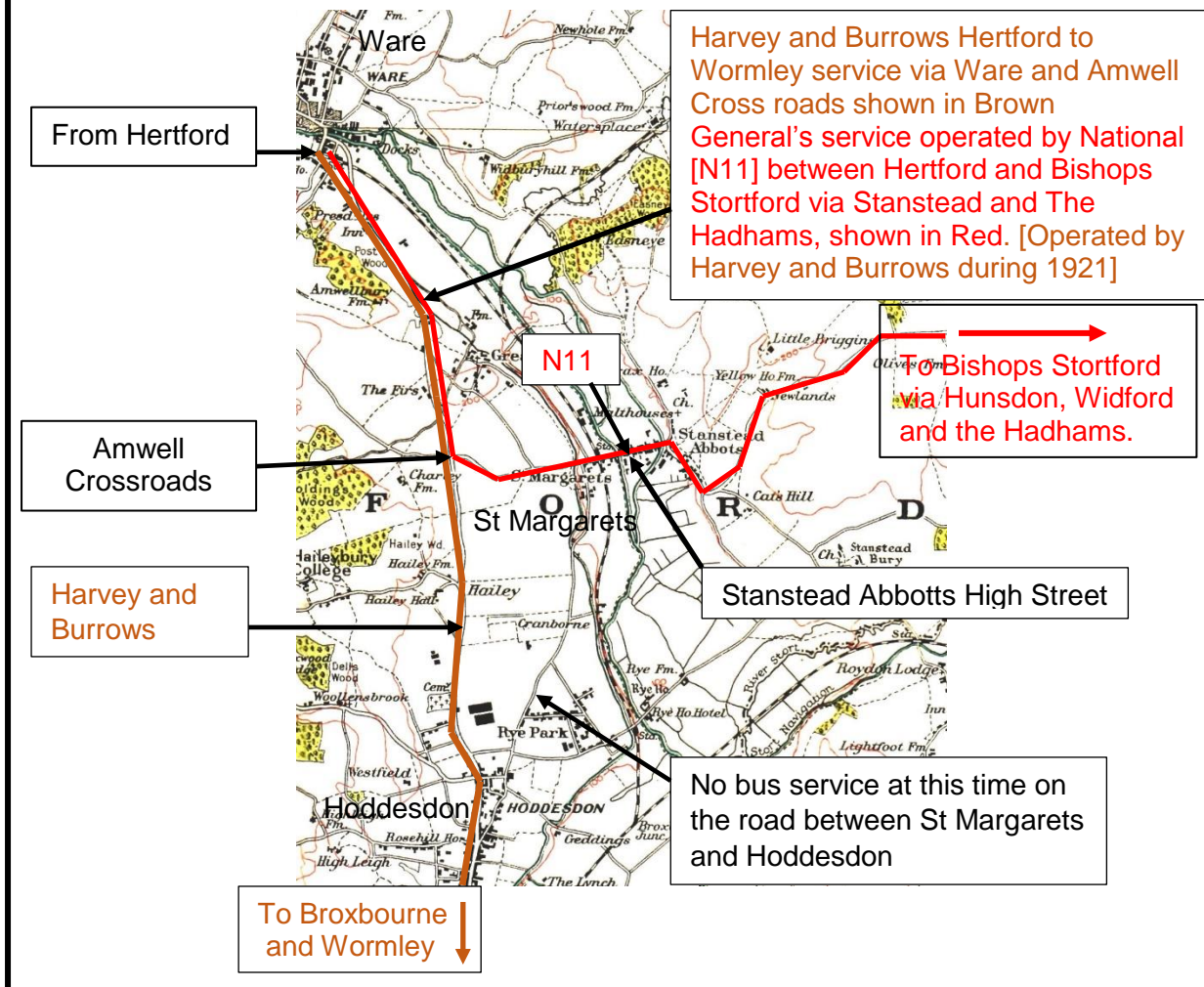
The following list shows the routes operated by Harvey and Burrows that had been built up in its 3 years and 4 months of operation. The route numbers allocated by the new operator National are also shown. *[Route N11 had been operated by National since December 1921]*

- N5 St Albans – Welwyn – Hitchin
- N10 St Albans – Hatfield – Cole Green – Hertford
- N10A St Albans – Hatfield – Essendon – Hertford.
- N11 Hertford – Ware – **Stanstead** – The Hadhams – Bishops Stortford.
- N25 Hertford to Waltham Cross.  
*[40 - 60 minute service provided via **Amwell Crossroads**]*
- N31 Hertford to Royston via Ware and Puckeridge and Buntingford.

*NB. Harvey and Burrows had also operated Hertford – Watton – Dane End – Stevenage  
[Reference to Stevenage in this article refers to today's High Street, Old Town Stevenage]*



## BUS SERVICES TO THE VILLAGE 1921 TO 1924



After Harvey and Burrows disappeared from the roads the 1924 London Traffic Act saw all services starting within the London Metropolitan Police area renumbered in 1925. The north of London received 300 series numbers which led to the N25 route from Waltham Cross to Hertford being renumbered as route 310, a bus number still used for this route today. With Harvey and Burrows out of the picture and much missed by locals, National made the most of their monopoly of the local services. In 1926 the 310 was extended from Waltham Cross [Eleanor's Cross] to the George Inn at Enfield Town.

The N10 and N10A routes [St Albans to Hertford variants] were extended to run to Rye House during the summer months of 1927 and 1928 respectively. Both of course stopping in St Margarets close to the Crown Inn in Hoddesdon Road. *[The Rye House Pleasure gardens were sold off in 1928 Christies Brewery Co. and ceased to be an attraction for excursionists]*

Another 1927 change saw half the N11 services diverted away from Stanstead Abbots to travel via Wareside between Ware and Widford using the route code N11A. In 1929 N10 and N11 routes were again altered by joining them together as a St Albans to Bishops Stortford service still retaining the variations in the routes for alternate buses. Therefore half the buses of this new N11 service ran through the village. In this way the General company were able to achieve their 1921 aim of a cross Hertfordshire service. Harvey and Burrows had been in competition on part of this route in 1921 which had prevented the idea being progressed with. It was therefore possible from 1927 until the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1935 to catch a bus in both Stanstead Abbots and St. Margarets that provided a direct service to St Albans.

In 1928 a new small local bus company, The People's Motor Services based in Ware began services and quickly became an important operator. The proprietor was Mr Thurgood a Ware based coachbuilder who registered the company on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1928. The first service to operate was Hertford to Braughing with later routes radiating out from Hertford and Ware.

#### THE EARLY PEOPLES BUS ROUTES

- 1) Hertford – Ware – Puckeridge – Braughing.
- 2) Hertford – Ware – **Stanstead** – Widford – Hadhams – Bishops Stortford
- 3) Hertford – Ware – **St. Margarets** – Hoddesdon – Wormley.
- 4) Hertford – Ware – **Stanstead** – Sawbridgeworth - Bishops Stortford
- 5) Hertford – Ware – **Stanstead** – Roydon
- 6&7) Two different routes from Hertford to Baldock

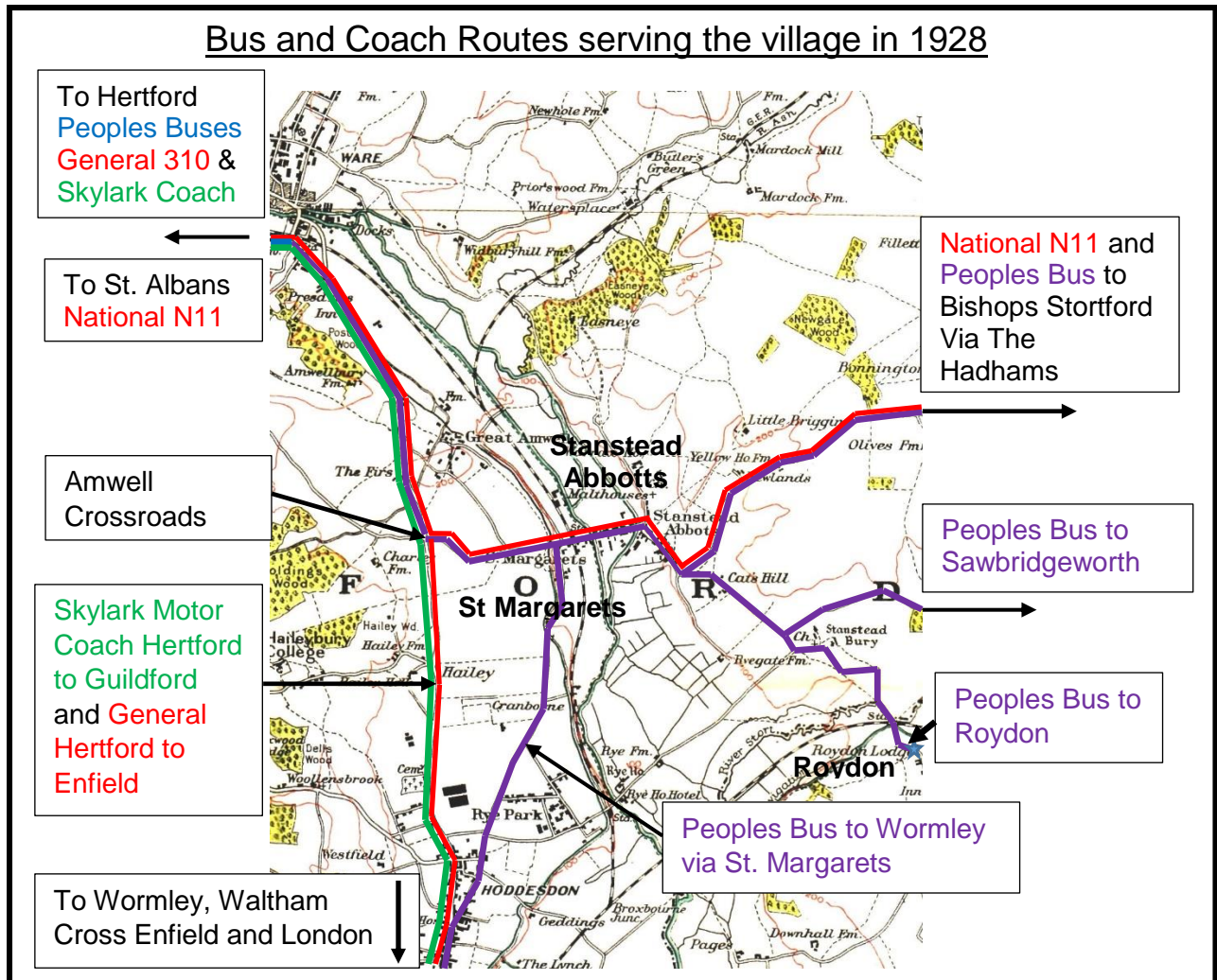


*A typical single deck bus operated by The People's Buses from their Ware Garage. These buses had pneumatic tyres and were more comfortable and pleasant to ride in than many of the buses provided on the National run services. These smaller buses usually carried less than 20 passengers because above that number the law required a conductor.*

The routes run by Peoples Bus tended to be in competition with the National run services. To counter this a strong loyalty was built up with passengers by treating them very well which reminded locals of the earlier bus services operated by Harvey and Burrows. The People's Buses' vehicles were also quite modern and well-appointed including pneumatic tyres and improved springing. These features compared well with the often rather old fashioned buses supplied by General for National to run its services. Indeed these buses were often open topped double deckers with the driver not even provided with a windshield. Apart from the fitting of pneumatic tyres and sometimes improved suspension these buses were often little different to the buses used to take soldiers to the front in WWI a decade earlier. Meanwhile General extended its own 310 service, on Sundays only, beyond Hertford to Stapleford, Watton and Stevenage. In the second half of the 1920s other unusual services ran like the Biss Brother's Sundays only route 69 from Camberwell Green to Ware and Hertford via Amwell Crossroads. This type of service was very much designed for excursionists from London for visits to the countryside. As such they were paving the way for the Green Line coaches that were to soon appear on the roads.



## Bus and Coach Routes serving the village in 1928



1929 saw a significant event concerning the services stopping at Amwell Crossroads. Skylark Motor Services began a motor coach service between London and Guildford in December 1928 and nine months later [October 1929] started a Hertford to London service. Shortly afterwards these two services were joined to run Hertford to Guildford. This was the first attempt at providing a cross London coach service. These were tentative steps to provide a more luxury limited stop on demand service at somewhat enhanced fares. [Skylark was acquired by General on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1932.]

The London General Omnibus Company had not wished to become involved with coach services but they saw that the Independent Companies were achieving some considerable success in a new market that was rapidly expanding. Not surprisingly perhaps they had a change of mind in 1930. Not a company to do things by half measure they created on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1930 Green Line Coaches Ltd, a totally owned subsidiary of LGOC. This new company was operated by National on behalf of General. Initially services started from London accompanied by the rapid introduction of high quality green liveried coaches, all done with some urgency to establish a network of services radiating from London. Their first truly Green Line service was on the Hertford - Ware – Enfield – Charing Cross service. [Route F from 21 February 1932]. This soon introduced to the road through Amwell Crossroads green single decker luxury coaches, something of a contrast to the red buses operated on local roads by National at the time. Passenger numbers on Green line coaches were not encouraging at first as the relative luxury and quick journey times was thought by many to mean a higher fare and beyond their means. Indeed every effort had been made to provide a quality service including hand-picked staff, state of the art new vehicles and a calm, pleasant, warm and draught free interior. This was a far cry from the rough and noisy ride experienced on many buses. Very astute publicity, in particular the use of examples of reasonable fares and quick journey times to popular destinations, soon turned the situation around and the Green Line services soon became a great success.



*Green Line quickly introduced these purpose built coaches to operate their services. T219 was built for the LGOC for its early Green Line services including that to Hertford. From 21st Feb. 1931 until 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1933 the Hertford route was lettered **F** afterwards **M***

General also altered their 310 Waltham Cross to Stevenage Sunday only service in 1930 by diverting half the buses northwards at Ware to serve Puckeridge, Buntingford, Chipping and Royston. A connecting bus met these services at Ware providing a connecting service to Hertford. The Sunday Waltham Cross - Royston services were numbered 316. The Sunday 310 and 316 ran alternate hours and took about 2 hours for the journey. The National operated weekday services on these routes north of Hertford and Ware as:-  
 N26 Broxbourne – Hertford Heath – Hertford – Stevenage  
 N31 Hertford – Ware – Buntingford Royston

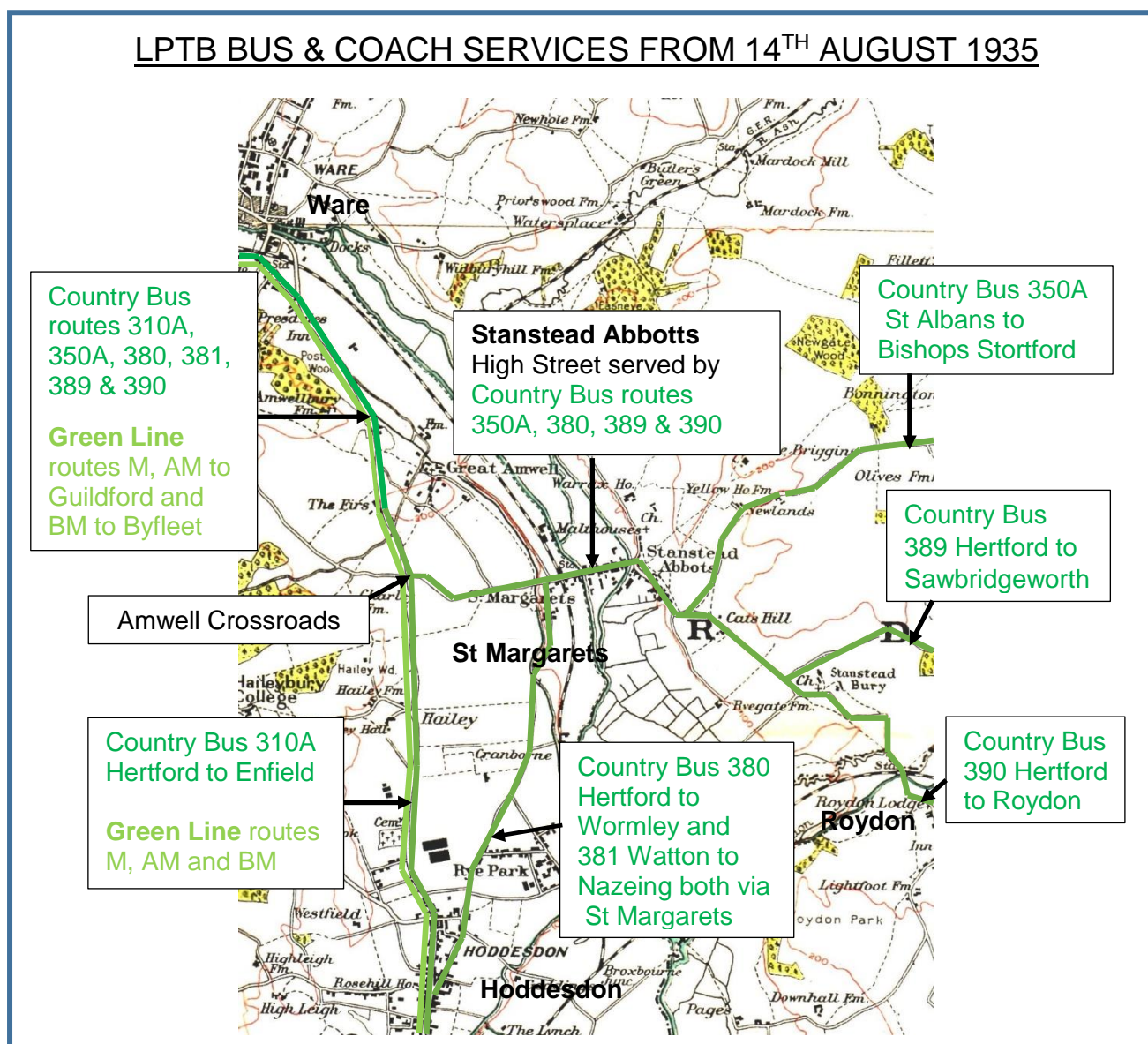


*As time progressed the double deck buses were improved to varying degrees. This one has windows and a roof for upstairs passengers but the driver remains out in the cold. This type saw use on services in Hertfordshire including the 310 to Hertford.*



A big change took place in 1932 when National created the London General Country Services Ltd [LGCS] which took over the running of country services north of London on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1932 and Green Line services on 11<sup>th</sup> May. However this was about preparing the management structures for things to come and not that much change was to be seen immediately by the travelling public. In the end this interim and somewhat transient organisation lasted just 18 months but did pave the way for the formation of the London Passenger Transport Board [LPTB]. London General Country Services Ltd and Green Line Coaches Ltd became the Country Bus and Coach Division of the new organisation. LPTB was inaugurated on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1933 taking charge of all road transport over a large area. It was to set about co-ordinating an economically viable and integrated system. In particular wasteful competition was to be removed. It had authority to organise transport on the road as far as 30 miles out from Charing Cross. LPTB introduced its new scheme in the Hertford area on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1935. This saw a rationalisation of bus and coach services with new route numbers for buses and letters for coaches allocated. Buses gradually had their livery changed to green to indicate their new Country services role while red remained the livery for the London district services.

### LPTB BUS & COACH SERVICES FROM 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1935



*The map shows the bus routes serving the village implemented by the LPTB Hertford Area reorganisation. Bus arrivals and departures at Hertford were arranged to aid passenger interchange between bus routes for those making longer journeys to the west of Hertford.*



Somewhat surprisingly for a small independent so close to London, People's Buses lasted until absorbed by the LPTB. However Mr Thurgood remained in charge from the take-over on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 1933 well into the next year. Buses remained in People's livery during this time and the passengers noticed little difference until the LPTB management took over in 1934. The People's Bus routes were to be reorganised and renumbered and incorporated within the LPTB Hertford area scheme, commencing on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1935.

310	Enfield – Waltham Cross - Hertford Heath – Stevenage [Sunday only] { <i>Ex General</i> }
310A	Enfield – Waltham - Ware - Hertford – Stevenage [Weekdays only] { <i>Ex General</i> }
310B	Enfield – Hertford – Aston [Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays only] { <i>New</i> }
331	Hertford – Buntingford [some running on to Royston] { <i>New Ex 316 &amp; Peoples Bus</i> }
340	St Albans – Hertford [Until 26 Nov 1935]. { <i>Both 340 &amp; 341 Ex National N11</i> }
341	St Albans – Hertford - <b>Stanstead</b> – Hadhams - Bishops Stortford. [Until 26 Nov 1935]
350	Hertford – Wareside - The Hadhams – Bishops Stortford [From 27 Nov 1935]
350A	Hertford – <b>Stanstead</b> – The Hadhams – Bishops Stortford [From 27 Nov 1935]
380	Hertford – Ware – <b>St Margarets</b> – Wormley { <i>Ex Peoples Bus</i> }
381	Nazeing – <b>St. Margarets</b> - Hertford – Watton { <i>ex National N26</i> }
384	Hertford – Stevenage – Letchworth – Baldock { <i>Ex Peoples</i> } { <i>Ex N33 to Dane End</i> }
386	Bishops Stortford – Buntingford – Hitchin { <i>Ex Peoples Bus</i> }
388	Hertford – Tewin – Welwyn – Hitchin – Baldock { <i>Ex Peoples Bus</i> }
389	Hertford – <b>Stanstead</b> – Sawbridgeworth – Bishops Stortford { <i>Ex Peoples Bus</i> }
390	Hertford – <b>Stanstead</b> – Roydon – Epping { <i>Extended Ex Peoples Bus</i> }

*The list above reflects the fact that all duplicate or similar routes were discontinued.  
The through running on Sundays of the 316 [a 310 variant] to Royston was discontinued.  
The 331 Hertford to Buntingford was a newly numbered route which ran every day, making the previous 316 Sunday service to Royston unnecessary.*

- Notes: - 1) The 310 route was to assume its Hertford – Enfield form in 1938 which continued to run until 2014 when it was cut back to run from Hertford to Waltham Cross via Amwell Crossroads as it had done before 1926.
- 2) Route 381 of 1935 was the forerunner of the 327 Hertford to Nazeing Gate via St Margarets service which ran from 1948 until 1977.

October 4<sup>th</sup> 1933 saw the introduction of new LPTB Green Line **M** route coaches, calling at Amwell Crossroads, in the form of three related cross London services.

Route M Guildford – Oxford Circus – Enfield – Hertford

Route AM Guildford - Esher – Cambridge Road – Hertford

Route BM Byfleet – Oxford Circus – Cambridge Road – Hertford.

[The use of route number 715 for Hertford to Guildford services started on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1946].

Two major assets of the local independent companies that had done so much to pioneer and then expand local services were to last until 1935. Both the People's Bus garage in Park Road Ware and the one time Harvey and Burrows garage behind Ware Town Hall closed the day Hertford Bus garage was opened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1935. It is fair to say that the 1921 to 1935 period were the formative years for motor bus services in the local area which set the foundations for the bus services of later years. Once London Transport assumed responsibility for the country bus and coach services in 1933, rapid progress was made in rationalising the network of routes. This revised structure, albeit with many variations on the theme, formed the basic structure of the services for many decades. The buses were quite quickly branded 'London Transport' and repainted into a dark green livery. London Transport maintained its control over country services until the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1970 when London Country Bus Services took over, applying its lighter green livery and 'London Country' branding. Privatisation of local buses occurred on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1988 bringing us full circle back to privately owned buses that the village first experienced with Harvey and Burrows in 1921. Thus began yet another era in the complex history of local buses serving the village.