

ON THE BUSES IN THE EARLY 1950's

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This is evidently the oldest photograph having been taken before 1948 when this bus was withdrawn from service. It is a Dennis Lancet I, four cylinder petrol engine chassis with a C30R Strachans body, built in 1932 and used during the war as an ambulance.



It appears that soon after the Second World War, as part of a wider strategy to sort out post-war traffic congestion in the town, Woking Council decided that an 'omnibus station' not far from the railway station would be a good idea. For a long time the Broadway had been the natural stopping point for buses and taxis dropping off (and picking up) passengers from the station. During the war the number of buses heading for Inkerman Barracks had increased so much that it was decided to cut down the trees that used to line the road by the railway. Later, of course, the local up-line of the railway would be removed so that a proper lay-by could be provided for the buses, but back in 1946 it appears that the Council's preference was for a bus station at all costs – and in May a series of meetings were held with representatives of the various bus companies to canvas their ideas.

The bus companies, it seems, were not that bothered about the council's plans for the omnibus station between Duke Street and The Broadway (on a site behind the Astoria Cinema), noting that the 'present arrangements were satisfactory', but that didn't deter the council who nevertheless went ahead with the plan. They eventually purchased the land, but in

typical decisively undecided fashion then delayed the construction of the bus station, using the area instead as a temporary car park.

At Kingfield Green and in Knaphill too they were looking to improve the lot of the passenger, with a proposal to convert former air-raid shelters into bus shelters – although in Knaphill's case it was dependent on the owner of the land on the corner of the Broadway and the High Street being willing to drop their asking price of £200!

They also agreed to a proposal from a company called Grayson Mann Publicity to erect eight shelters 'free of charge' to the council on the condition that they had the right for eight years to display advertisements thereon. The location of these new shelters was recorded as being in Chertsey Road adjoining the Sunray Restaurant, at the Goldsworth Road Car Park, in Old Woking near Mill Moor, at Westfield opposite the Cricketers, in Byfleet adjacent to the school, and on Horsell High Street, with two being erected near Maybury Arch. Later still other shelters were to be provided by the council at a dozen sites all over the district, with the council also insisting that the bus companies themselves chip in – four shelters initially being



The train timetable also had bus times advertised on pages 81 to 96

agreed to by the Aldershot & District Traction Company and London Transport.

It appears that the last of the eight advertising shelters was installed at Westfield Road where in April 1947 the council reported that a lay-by on the common opposite the Cricketers had been constructed.



In the meantime the council were anxious for the bus service in the town to develop, asking the London Passenger Transport Board to increase the service between Woking and Byfleet at mid-day 'in view of the large number of school children using the buses at this time' and to provide a separate service from Pyrford to Woking 'in view of the shortage of seating accommodation on omnibuses passing through Pyrford'.

Not all new services were approved, however, with the Aldershot & District being refused

permission to operate a service between Woking and Sunningdale Stations via Carhouse Lane at Horsell due to the carriageway being too narrow in places for the thirty-two seat buses proposed for the route. Even the smaller twenty seaters would have necessitated passing bays being constructed, so perhaps some modern motorists may regret the council's action (or inaction) on this occasion.

Another Dennis Lancet III, delivered for service in January 1951.

This Dennis Lancet III J3 "06" 7.585 litre direct-injection 6-cylinder oil engine bus was built in 1949 (and remained in service until 1959).

I have in my collection of ephemera a number of leaflets advertising changes of service at this time, as well as a full timetable linking the running of the local buses with that of the trains. I also have a few photographs taken by local enthusiasts at the time of local buses, the details of which I hope I have been reliably informed about (but if not then I am sure I will quickly be corrected)!

