

Walker's Buses

THANET BUS PIONEER

MR. W. H. WALKER'S RECORD

Article dated about 1930 in the local press?

The announcement that a company have acquired Walker's bus service marks the passing of one of the pioneers of regular bus services in the Island, and recalls the days when horse buses alone served the public.

Mr. W. H. Walker, of Birchington, has held a licence to run public buses for over thirty years. As the local manager for the late Mr. R. Lamb, of Mitcham, he secured a licence to run a horse bus from Birchington to Margate to scheduled times, and commenced with what was known as a four-horse "garden-seat" bus. The bus left Birchington every hour and a half, and although the journey to Margate usually took half an hour, it was sometimes accomplished in twenty minutes – the time now allowed for motor buses. The horses need a rest before they did the return journey – hence the longer wait in between arrival and departure times. The single fare in those days was sixpence; now it is fivepence.

About 1911 or 1912 a company applied for licences to run motor buses on that route, which were granted, and led to Mr. Walker, who acquired the local business of Mr. Lamb, substituting three motor buses – two of them double-deckers – for the one horse bus. About that time the authorities concerned decided to licence three buses from Margate and three from Birchington, making six on that route – a service which has been unaltered. Some seven years ago Mr. Walker obtained a licence to run a bus from Minnis Bay, Birchington, to Minster; whilst four years ago he was able to inaugurate a service from Birchington, via Manston, to Ramsgate.

Mr. Walker also started a service from Westgate-on-Sea to Margate for Mr. Lamb. Within a few days Walker's yellow buses will disappear from the road, and be supplanted by those of a company, with the result that one who is probably the oldest omnibus licence-holder in Thanet will cease to be in that position.