

Grange Buses enquiry

Recently John Hirst of Halifax contacted the Society to see if we knew of any historic publications about the Grange public bus company and shared interesting information about visiting Grange after 1945.

'My interest in Grange began after WW2 when in the late 40s and 50s I was brought to Grange at frequent intervals by my father and step mother to stay with my step mother's relations at 'Wycombe' on the Esplanade who at that time were running the Promenade Café near the Lido. I have many happy memories as a teenager of time spent walking, swimming, visits to the cinema and the station and remember particularly the little single deck red painted buses trundling up and down Main Street and elsewhere. Was this a private independent company I ask myself or was it part of a larger group like, say, Ribble Motors or Pennine'.

I was able to give a bit of information from W E Swale's book Grange-over-Sands, the story of a gentle township which was published in 1972. Frank Parker and Sons of Lindale started a bus service in 1924 to rival the Grange Motor and Cycle Company founded in 1914. Ribble Motor Services of Preston, established in 1919, gradually absorbed local services taking over Grange Motors in 1951 and Parkers in 1964. However I was unable to say which company ran the single deck red painted buses.

John subsequently supplied more information about his visits to Grange. *My step-mother's relations I mentioned earlier were her uncle Jack and auntie Doris Garforth who teamed up after the war to make a living running the café. (They had eleven other brothers and sisters!). Doris baked everything for the café using ovens located in a wooden shed just to one side of the café building. A concrete base for the shed is still in place today though hidden by hedges and other foliage. Her cakes, buns and biscuits were very popular and contributed much I'm sure to the success of the business. In time they had to leave the prom. (perhaps the lease ran out, I'm not sure) and set up a small café in one of the rooms at 'Wycombe' for a few years. Neither of them were ever married and they died within a few weeks of each other in 1972.*

I still visit Grange at least once a year to renew memories and it is my hope that someday the Lido (now, I think, a listed building) may be reinstated. Who knows?

Can anyone add more information about the buses that served Grange during the 20th century? Does anyone remember the Garforth brother and sister? Do you have memories you would like to share with us?

Pat Rowland
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