

Outstations – mainly Lincolnshire RCC and Eastern Counties

Another short story from Alan M Watkins

I would say that Western/Southern National had the greatest number even over and above the huge area of ECOC but that's purely guesswork on my part. The problem is, also, that outstations "came and went", sometimes with restructuring or, as has been mentioned, with driver or conductor retirements. So it's a minefield and I think the best anyone could manage would be a snapshot at a particular specific date/year.

In my time (late 50's into the early 60's) the outstations of **Lincolnshire Road Car** were as follows accompanied by what I know about them and the vehicles of my time.

Binbrook - wooden building taken over from Stark of Binbrook and which housed an LWL with various turns on Lincoln-Grimsby/Cleethorpes Service 3 including a couple of runs to Lincoln but only on certain days of the week.

Barton on Humber: One decker and two saloons, the decker for Scunthorpe and local schools. Provided the vehicle for the New Holland-Lincoln Service 4 (saloon only route). Had the distinction of having the last Leyland TS7 in service for the Road Car. Out of sight, out of mind probably.

Brigg: 3, most of which spent their time actually working in Scunthorpe.

Glentham: A double decker parked in the open about 100 yards down from the village shop to do the commuter 4a into Lincoln. The decker also did shorts to Welton, the biggest village on the route and that's why it was a decker.

Alford: A "tram" left in the Market Place to work the 8 a.m from Alford to Lincoln Service 10B. This ceased in my time when the conductor reached retirement age and went "in house" to Mablethorpe which was the parent garage anyway.

Winterton: Double decker to work the Scunthorpe steel works services seven days a week. 4.50 a.m. sign on even on Sundays. Two crews.

Oakham: Double decker, two sets of crews. A middle journey - the 1.10 from Grantham to Oakham and the 2.35 return covered by Grantham for the first crew meal break using the Oakham vehicle. Left in the open in the Goods Yard (then) at Oakham Railway Station.

Colsterworth: 3, one on the 23b which was an awesomely rural ramble of over two hours - including three village fords - on the North Witham "circular" (and circular it certainly was with lots of doubling back). Had been L's but was SC's in my time. Originally Road Car Bedfords were used - not much happened on the 23B. Grantham had a couple of turns, usually SC but occasionally crewed SC on Sunday when they worked it. The other Colsterworth came in to Grantham as a duplicate and worked various turns except on Tuesday when it worked on Tues to Melton Mowbray and on Friday when it did two journeys to and fro Stamford on the 24B. The third worked the 25A Grantham-Melton Mowbray.

Billingborough: 2: A double decker and a saloon, the latter a woefully underpowered 4-cyl LWL. There was a dormy shed here but the double decker had to stand outside. The decker worked a duplicate from 8 a.m. Billingborough-Sleaford on Service 34 and then worked various ex Sleaford journeys until it worked back on the 4.15 p.m. Sleaford to Billingborough. The saloon spent it's time trundling around 20 miles from Billingborough to Grantham on Service 26, another rural ramble. Three sets of crews. Grantham worked the Service 26 on Sunday.

Walcot sort of qualifies in a weird way. Used to appear in the official list as Garage but then disappeared out of the public timetable as a contact point - absolutely out in the middle of the flatlands Lincolnshire fens it had a decent garage which could accommodate saloons but the two deckers (for the 2C into Lincoln and latterly FLF's) had to be parked in the open on a bit of spare land about 200 yards up the road. Six or seven vehicles usually – the Fenland market journeys into Boston on the 8B and 8C on Wednesdays ended up going on the augmented Boston Town Services on Wednesday. About ten crews I think originally but down to about five for the two deckers and one saloon in my time as OMO and the incredibly quiet SC's kicked in. At least it looked like a proper bus depot.....only the 2C was decker worked, the rest were all saloons only.

Eastern National, in my time/knowledge, only had three. Brightlingsea, Dunmow and (originally) Sudbury, the latter for the 86 into Colchester. When the Sudbury outstation ceased I have no idea but it was certainly going immediately postwar. For years the 123 Clacton-Ipswich had a "foreign" double decker overnight - there was a walk across the road crew change at Cattawade on the last up and down journeys and so an Eastern National green decker overnighed at Ipswich Depot while an Eastern Counties red bus overnighed at Clacton. All sorted out in the morning!

Eastern Counties:

For those interested here is a complete list of outstations, originally supplied to me by ECOC around about the mid 60's. Obviously outstations changed over the years although I don't think they changed much in ECOC time until the decline of rural services in the 70's. All of these had of course been crew operated at one time and some housed double deckers - Attleborough for one, usually a modern FL. Sea Palling was L worked to quite late.

In the 50's I got the impression that the older pre-war vehicles were cascaded to a peaceful retirement to many of these. I have a very vivid memory of seeing pre War Bristol's from ECOC in Colchester on the market day services (which were worked by Sudbury and Boxford outstations) - wonderful old leviathans still with their "tin Bible" destination boards on the front and "Relief" written in chalk sometimes. I journeyed on them several times and it was the policy of the outstation crew to keep the day's necessary boards under the rear seats! That would have been about 1956-57 when the old pre-war Bristols were coming to the end of their time.

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Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft & Cromer Outstations:

Acle, Attleborough, Aylsham, Beccles, Blakeney, Brooke, Bungay, Cawston, East Dereham, Fakenham, Garboldisham, Halesworth, Harleston, Holt, Loddon, Long Stratton, Martham, Melton Constable, Mundesley, Mundham, New Buckenham, North Walsham, Salhouse, Sea Palling, Southwold, Stalham, Watton, Wymondham.

Ipswich & Bury St Edmunds Outstations:

Ardleigh, Barningham, Barrow, Bawdsey, Beck Row, Bildeston, Boxford, Boyton, Brandon, Cattawade, Colchester, Debenham, Diss, East Bergholt, Eye, Framlingham, Hadleigh, Holme Hale, Hopton, Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Mistley, Orford, Shotley, Stowmarket, Stradbroke, Stradishall, Sudbury, Thetford, Walsham-Le-Willows, Woodbridge.

Cambridge, Ely & Newmarket Outstations:

Bassingbourn, Burwell, Caxton, Cottenham, Duxford, Earith, Fenstanton, Haverhill, Hinxton, Linton, Littleport, Longstowe, Royston, Saffron Walden, St Ives, Soham, Southery.

Peterborough, King's Lynn, March & Wisbech Outstations:

Chatteris, Crowland, King's Cliffe, Market Deeping, Oundle, Ramsey, Spalding, Whittlesey, Docking, Downham Market, Grimston, Hunstanton, Massingham, Northwold, St John's Fen End, Stoke Ferry, Swaffham, Three Holes, Wells-next-the Sea.