

Our Business Series

Wicliffe

MOTOR CO. LTD.

Once A Cycle Shop, Now Has Its
Branches In Other Towns ★
Success of Stroud Venture

"LARGE oaks from little acorns grow" is a saying which might very truly be applied to that well-known motor business the Wicliffe Motor Co. Ltd. which, since 1907, when Truscotts Cycle Shop was purchased by Mr. Frederick Smith and re-named the Wicliffe Cycle Company, has spread its branches throughout the years and by the judicious acquisition of various properties now operate from Morris House, Bath Road, Cheltenham (acquired 1918), Wicliffe Motor Co. Ltd., Worcester Street Gloucester (in 1945), Western Garage, Cainscross (in 1930), and Gwent Motors, Newport (in 1931). Further extensions are now contemplated in respect of a new Commercial Vehicle Depot to be erected opposite the new Cattle Market in Gloucester. The Stroud premises at Russell Street, Stroud, remain the Company's Head Office.

EARLY DAYS

In the early days, various Agencies were held including the locally made "Hampton" car which, it will be recalled, was manufactured at Dudbridge, but as the years progressed service and sales activities were confined to two leading makes of car—Austin and Morris.

In the late twenties both these manufacturers demanded exclusive agencies and the decision was then made to drop the Austin franchise and concentrate on Morris and it is since then that the Company has

these years they have also held the distributorship of Morris commercial vehicles and indeed to this day some of the earliest models of this range can still be seen on the Gloucestershire roads.

BIG CHANGE

The Wicliffe Motor Co. can never be accused of not moving with the times and a big change at Stroud took place in 1936, when the cycle shop and the small garage next door was incorporated into one large building, with the Wicliffe frontage as it is known today. Since then, extensive alterations were made to the garage in 1954 to give modern up-to-date showrooms and at the same time advantage was taken to enlarge the stores. It is safe to say that the present-day Russell Street premises are amongst the most attractive in the district and in conjunction with the recently installed centralised Stock Control system ensures a uniform flow of spare parts between all the branches of the Company, Morris motorists over a wide area are assured of the best service.

Many people remember the personalities of the Company who have held the reins during the past 50 years. Mr. Frederick Smith, the founder, decided to make his concern a limited company in 1929 and on his death in 1937, Mr. E. R. (Dick) Parsons became managing director, a position he held until his death in 1951. Mr. Parsons was associated with Mr. Smith from the very



A photograph of Wicliffe Garage as it was before the removal of the cycle shop (right) widened its front for cars. Included in the group, many of whom have passed away since, are Mrs. J. A. Endacott, Mrs. A. Lane, Messrs. F. M. Smith, J. Lapage Norris, E. R. Parsons, A. Burton, F. Gittins, C. H. Sanderson, W. T. Tuck, L. Collins, W. Collins, H. J. Dee and three representatives of the Press, J. W. Thompson ("Journal"), J. Sollars ("Stroud News"), and F. G. Whatley ("Citizen").

director has been Mr. A. O. Pearce, himself a well-known personality, under whose guidance the whole sphere of the Company's operations have forged ahead to keep up with the most modern trends in all aspects of the motor trade. Mr. Pearce is ably assisted by Mr. E. G. D. Putnam (deputy managing director), together with Mr. W. G. Leach and Mrs. F. Fincher, herself a daughter of the late Mr. Frederick Smith.

Another well-known personality—in fact, the oldest serving employee—is Mr. Maurice Wiltshire, the manager of the Cainscross branch, who joined the Company at the Russell Street premises as a boy in 1919 and until 1954 was in charge of the workshops at Stroud until his promotion and move to Cainscross. Altogether the firm employs thirty-five persons in the Stroud area alone.

The workshops, situated in Russell Street, have during the last eighteen months undergone modernisation and the service manager, Mr. D. C. Pitt—himself a racing motorist—is fortunate in having at his disposal a host of up-to-date repair equipment which, together with his qualified workshop staff enables him to satisfy every need the discerning motorists require for the peak performance of their motor cars.

FROM THE STARS

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In the late twenties both these manufacturers demanded exclusive agencies and the decision was then made to drop the Austin franchise and concentrate on Morris and it is since then that the Company has earned its present reputation in the motor world primarily for Morris cars but also, of course, as agents for the remainder of the Nuffield range; M.G., Riley and Wolseley cars. During all

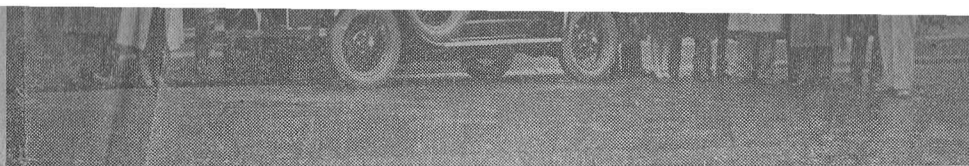
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