



Regel Bus snowbound near Wroxall



This photograph was taken by Wickenden & Co., photographers of Ventnor. The year is 1927 and the month is December. A legend added to the photo states that the bus in question became snowbound on New Year's night (presumably eve) as it was journeying from Ventnor to Wroxall. However, the reverse of the photo dates it as December 27th. This is almost certainly the correct date, for Fred Nobbs once related the details of the news story to Fay Brown. The bus was returning to Shanklin on Boxing night when it was forced to a halt by driving snow. For twelve hours, it was completely engulfed, with mostly boys and girls inside. The driver on that trip was Sid Newnham and the conductor Jack Snudder. One assumes that a rescue party went out very early the next day to rescue the youngsters and the crew.

The picture is clearly taken either a full day after the incident, or possibly even several days after. A whole group of local people have come out to try and help get the vehicle moving. The legend with the photo has names for some of the faces. The woman on the far right is thought to be Rosa Linington and the two young lads immediately to her left, Eddie and William Linington. The two men in flat caps standing at the back on the far right are Ernest Linington and John Linington, the former described as from Canada. Also thought to be in the picture, but not identified on it, are Mr and Mrs Willie May and Mr Harry Baker. The driver of the bus on this occasion is Fred Lawson (just visible in the cab) and the bus itself is very new, first registered in June 1927. It is a Dennis E-type with a Dennis 26-seat body. It was called the Regel Bus and plied between Ventnor and Shanklin via Wroxall. According to the late Fay Brown, the bus has become snowbound at the point where Johnny Dore had an allotment near the top of the hill towards Ventnor at the corner of Mountfield Road.

Studying the picture a little more carefully, it is plain that snow has drifted to a considerable depth, perhaps as much as six feet or so. On Christmas Day that year, and extending all through Boxing Day, a blizzard raged across a large part of southern England, right from Kent to Cornwall. One to two feet of snow fell in that period, but in exposed places, huge drifts formed. On Salisbury Plain, they measured near twenty feet.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre. Details of the bus can be found in Mark Chessell's book: *Independent Bus Services on the Isle of Wight* (2012)



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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